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Pope: There's time to end Iraq crisis peacefully

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul said on Sunday there was still time to resolve the crisis over U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq without violence. "I firmly believe it is possible for the differing sides to understand each other and to reaffirm the principles which peacefully regulate international cohabitation," the Pope said after his regular Sunday Angelus speech. "I hope that those responsible for the livelihood of nations fall back on the instruments of diplomacy and dialogue to avoid any sort of armed conflict," he told pilgrims and tourists in St. Peter's Square. "The current situation in Iraq and in the entire Middle East region teaches us that armed conflict does not resolve problems but creates deeper misunderstandings between peoples."

Palestinian human chain blocks settler land grab

HUSAN (AFP) — More than 200 Palestinian villagers formed a human chain Sunday to prevent Israelis from a nearby settlement from bulldozing a road across their fields, witnesses said. Residents of this village outside Bethlehem said settlers from the enclave of Betar brought two bulldozers to clear a road to a nearby 50 hectare parcel of land where they want to build a new Jewish settlement. The villagers linked arms and stood in front of the bulldozers. Several scuffles broke out but an Israeli army patrol refrained from intervening and the settlers backed down, Palestinian witnesses said. Residents of Betar said they had state permission to build on the disputed land and would ask the military to protect their work crews.

Iraqi FM to tour Arab countries

AMMAN (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf is to visit Syria on Monday on the first leg of a tour of Arab countries which will also take him to Egypt and Jordan, Arab diplomatic sources here said Sunday. Mr. Sahhaf is to explain Iraq's stand in the crisis with the United Nations over arms inspections, the sources said. He plans to travel to Damascus by road from Baghdad, the sources said.

Mandela slams U.S. over Iraq

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — The U.S. should stop regarding itself as the world's policeman, President Nelson Mandela said Sunday in a blistering condemnation of Washington's policy on Iraq. Reporting on a television interview to be broadcast later Sunday on public SABC television, SABC radio said President Mandela criticised the U.S. for interfering in matters of regional conflict. The South African leader said in the interview it was wrong to have so many U.S. representatives in the United Nation's team searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Israeli army destroys Palestinian buildings

KHAN YUNIS (AFP) — The Israeli army has destroyed two structures being built by Palestinians near a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip, according to a military spokesman. The structures that had not received Israeli permits located just outside the Palestinian city of Khan Yunis were too close to a military road and the adjacent settlement, the spokesman said late Saturday. Liaison officials with the Palestinian police issued a complaint to the Israeli army protesting that they were not contacted prior to the destruction of the buildings located in an area where the forces jointly oversee security, Palestinian police officials said.

Arab-Israeli jailed for giving pictures to 'enemy'

AKKO (AFP) — An Arab-Israeli woman was given a reduced prison sentence here Sunday after confessing to giving information to "enemy agents," judicial sources said. Nadia Fawdeh, a 45-year-old English teacher married to an Egyptian doctor, was sentenced to four months of public service and fined $2,800. A 32-month prison sentence was suspended after the Israeli authorities dropped the more serious espionage charges. She was arrested in this northern Israel town in August and acknowledged having given photographs of "sensitive sites" in Israel eight years ago to a Palestinian in Egypt who turned them over to the Iraqi secret service.

Iran denies buying Chinese missiles

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani on Sunday denied U.S. charges that his country had signed a deal to buy cruise missiles from China. "We have not signed any such contract with China," the admiral told a press conference. "China has probably raised this subject to get advanced technology from the United States," he charged, insisting that Iran did not need to buy such weaponry from abroad. "We have the capability to manufacture what we need for our army," he said.

Russia proposes partial closure of investigation

Saudi Arabia declares opposition to military strike on Iraq in advance of Cohen's visit

Combined Agency Despatches

RUSSIA ON Sunday launched a fresh diplomatic initiative in the Iraqi arms crisis, proposing a partial closure of the U.N. investigation and calling on U.N. chief Kofi Annan to go to Baghdad to mediate.

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov said Russia was "very keen" to see the U.N. secretary-general go to Baghdad to find a peaceful way out of the U.N. arms inspection crisis.

He also proposed immediately closing the part of the U.N. disarmament investigation concerning nuclear weapons to show Iraq some "light at the end of the tunnel," an incentive to co-operate with the remaining portions.

Mr. Primakov outlined the proposals in a Russian RTR television interview.

An Arab diplomatic source in Baghdad had said Saturday that Russia had won Mr. Annan's approval in its quest for a diplomatic solution.

"Kofi Annan has come on board," said the Arab diplomat who has followed closely the running negotiations to avert a threatened U.S.-British military strike on Iraq.

The development came a day after Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz conferred with a Russian envoy in Baghdad and, by telephone, with Mr. Annan.

"If we close this [disarmament] file by stages, we

(Continued on page 7)

Russian ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky makes a point beside Iraqi Ambassador Hassan Fahmi Jumah at Vnukovo airport Sunday. A delegation of Russian deputies failed to depart from Moscow to Iraq on a humanitarian aid flight and monitoring mission on Sunday because Iran refused them permission to cross its airspace (Reuters photo)

Russian lawmakers' flight to Iraq left standing on runway

MOSCOW (AFP) — A Russian parliamentary delegation's flight to Iraq was left standing on the airport runway Sunday hours after its scheduled take-off because of British and U.S. protests it would violate a U.N. embargo.

Ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky and a group of lawmakers and journalists planned to fly from Moscow to Baghdad with a planeload of humanitarian aid.

The plane was to have departed Moscow at 10:00 a.m., but six hours later it was still sitting on the runway, with all passengers aboard, waiting for permission to take off.

Amid British and U.S. objections, Iran refused Saturday to grant permission for the Vnukova Airlines plane to cross its airspace enroute to Iraq unless the U.N. Security Council consented to the flight.

A Russian diplomat in Tehran said Iran's foreign ministry on Sunday repeated that refusal, ITAR-TASS reported.

Mr. Zhirinovsky protested

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Regent, Kerr discuss Iraq crisis, deadlock in PNA-Israel talks

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday emphasised the need for exerting all possible efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the current U.N.-Iraq crisis.

Speaking at a meeting in the Royal Court with Sir John Kerr, the permanent under-secretary of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Regent said that regional and international efforts should be pooled together in order to defuse the crisis and to ward off any military confrontation which neither Iraq nor the whole region can endure.

Sir John meanwhile said that Britain was in support of all efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis, and that the sanctions imposed on Iraq need to be lifted once Iraq has commited itself to the implementation of the U.N. Security Council's resolutions.

Sir John, whose country is the current president of the European Union (EU), said the Europeans are working towards finding a way out of the present deadlock in the Middle East peace process and are urging the U.S. to put more pressure on Israel to achieve fruitful results.

In this respect, the Regent underlined the need for intensifying efforts towards putting the peace process back on track and giving impetus towards establishing a comprehensive and permanent peace which can guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Sir John met earlier with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and said that the United Kingdom is maintaining contacts with European leaders and U.S. President Bill Clinton on the Middle East peace process and is encouraging the U.S. administration to put forth proposals to the Palestinian and Israeli

(Continued on page 7)

Suspended weeklies allowed to go to press again

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government on Sunday gave weekly newspapers the green light to resume publication, in line with two recent rulings by the High Court of Justice revoking tough press restrictions, officials and publishers announced.

Bilal Tal, head of the Press and Publications Department (PPD), told the Jordan Times yesterday that he telephoned the weeklies' publishers following Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's instructions.

"Mr. Tal told us that we can resume publication at any time we want," publisher Nidal Mansour confirmed.

His Al Hadath weekly is scheduled to reappear on the newsstands in two weeks, "the time we need to organise ourselves," Mr. Mansour told the Jordan Times.

The government had earlier argued that the court's rulings were not retroactive, and therefore, the weeklies which had their licences revoked must apply for new licences to resume publications.

Officials last night were not immediately available to explain the reasons that prompted the government's new policy.

The High Court of Justice on Saturday ruled in favour of three weekly newspapers suspended by the government last September.

Al Urdun, Al Faris, and Al Najem weeklies won their case against the government because the May 1997 amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law, under which they had been suspended, were declared as "unconstitutional" by Jordan's supreme court.

A similar ruling, in favour of eight weeklies that had their licences revoked, was issued by the High Court on Jan.26.

The High Court, chaired by Judge Abdullah Haddad, ruled that the amendments had been introduced by temporary law while Parliament was in recess and there was no state of emergency or necessitating circumstances for the government to change the previous law.

The press amendments, widely interpreted as targeting the tabloid industry for its outspoken criticism of the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, introduced a prohibitive JD300,000 capital requirement that the weeklies failed to meet.

(Continued on page 7)

Turkey accuses U.S. of wanting to create Kurdish state in Iraq

ANKARA (AFP) — The U.S. showdown with Iraq is designed to control world petrol prices and set up a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, Turkey's deputy premier charged Sunday.

"I don't believe that a superpower like the United States doesn't have a plan for after the war," Bulent Ecevit told Turkish journalists in Ankara.

"The United States wants to divide Iraq to create a Kurdistan satellite state under its control," he said, adding that Washington has had such an objective since the 1991 Gulf war.

"My impression is that the United States has the goal of creating a Kurdistan, divide Iraq and in such a way control the price of petrol," he said.

The imposition of a "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq after the Gulf war has allowed several armed Kurdish groups to base themselves there without fear of air attacks from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces.

Ankara, however, has several times sent massive numbers of troops over the border into Iraq to wipe out bases being used by Turkish Kurd separatists fighting for an independent state in southern Turkey.

(Continued on page 7)

Israelis, Palestinians head to U.S. for more talks on pullbacks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israelis and Palestinians prepared Sunday for another round of negotiations in Washington with few hopes for a breakthrough in their standoff over new troop pullbacks from the West Bank.

With the Iraq crisis dominating world diplomacy and Israelis and Palestinians showing few signs of flexibility, officials from the two sides could not even say Sunday if their negotiators would hold face-to-face talks or simply meet with American mediators.

Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat each met with their top aides Sunday before sending the negotiators to the U.S. capital on Monday, officials said.

The Israeli delegation will be headed by cabinet secretary, Danny Naveh, and Mr. Netanyahu's diplomatic advisor, Uzi Arad. The Palestinian team will be led by chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat.

The Washington meetings are a follow-up to talks U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright held here and in the West Bank last week with Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat

(Continued on page 7)

Amman Chamber of Industry pushes for transformation to national body

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) on Sunday responded to efforts by some industrialists to set up separate chambers of industry by endorsing a call to accelerate steps to transform the ACI into a national industrial body.

At a meeting of the ACI general assembly on Sunday, industrialists agreed to form an expanded committee that would cooperate with the chamber's board to draft, with the Minister of Industry and Trade Hani Mulki, a law for the creation of a "Jordan Chamber of Industry."

The meeting was prompted by a recent government decision to authorise the establishment of an independent chamber of industry in Zarqa.

The move enraged several Jordanian industrialists who said the decision would harm Jordan's economy by fragmenting the industrial sector at a time when the private sector should join forces to confront challenges posed by economic globalisation.

Twenty-three industrialists in the governorates of Zarqa and Mafraq asked Dr. Mulki several months ago to set up two separate chambers to avoid what they said was "power centralisation in ACI hands."

The minister had backed efforts to create a chamber in Zarqa saying it was in line with the existing legislation which allows for the establishment of such chambers to serve local industrial needs in the different areas in the country.

Some ACI supporters saw the move as undermining the role of the chamber — for decades the sole powerful lobby of over 9,000 industrialists across the country.

During Sunday's meeting many industrialists warned that setting up independent chambers would further worsen the plight of an industrial sector already suffering from recession and harmed by dismantling of customs barriers, as part of international trade accords.

"It is a healthy exercise to criticise the chamber of industry but it is a big mistake to destroy the institution," said prominent industrialist, Anis Muasher.

Jordanian popular support for Iraqis remains strong, but the public seems more 'rational'

By Tareq Ayyoob
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians are enraged by Washington's "double-standard" policies on the Middle East that threaten military strikes against Iraq while failing to twist the arms of Israeli leaders for defying U.N. resolutions and stalling peace-making in the region.

Most daily newspapers remain critical of the U.S. eight years after Iraq invaded Kuwait, triggering the Gulf crisis that inflicted losses of billions of dollars for Jordan and upturned regional politics.

Jordanian popular support for the Iraqi people remains strong, despite strained bilateral ties and closer links with Washington since Amman signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

But unlike its perceived pro-Iraqi support in 1990, Jordan is officially in line with most Arab and Western states — insisting on a diplomatic solution but firmly joining U.S. warnings that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's defiance of the United Nations over arms inspections would cost him dearly and destabilise the region.

Amman's refusal to join a U.S.-led military alliance that ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait in February 1991, cast a heavy toll on the country, forcing the expulsion of thousands of Jordanians from Kuwait and the suspension of vital aid by Gulf Arab states.

NEWS ANALYSIS

"The Jordanian people's support for Iraq is still alive as they want to see an end to all these American threats and to the plight of the Iraqis," said Yasser Ahmad, a taxi driver.

"But many of the people I see everyday say we are not a superpower and wonder what Jordan can do to help Iraq if Iraq is not even helping itself..."

University student Ahmad Saleh echoed other common views.

"U.S. President [Bill] Clinton threats to hit Iraq are designed to shift media attention from a sex scandal he might fall into and to satisfy the Jewish lobby in the United States who fear Iraq might attack Israel," he added.

"Why does the U.S. refuse to maintain the same pressure against Israel which is violating U.N. resolutions every day and defying the world's will by refusing to honour signed peace deals and pursuing aggressive policies against the Palestinians," he asked.

However, many analysts and politicians say Jordanians in general appear more rational now, compared to 1990 when pro-Iraqi and anti-U.S. demonstrations swept Jordanian streets. Apart from seminars in support of Iraq, no marches have been held though the vocal pro-Iraqi opposition in Jordan claims that the government is banning them.

Many believe that tough policies pursued by President Hussein, once admired by Arabs for his defiance of the West, are behind the erosion of his popular support in Amman.

This, however, contrasts sharply with popular sympathy for the Iraqi people, who in the eyes of Jordanians, remain the only victims of crippling economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations on Iraq in 1990.

Iraq's December execution of four Jordanians for

(Continued on page 7)

Bomb kills four, security forces kill 16 rebels in Algeria — papers

PARIS (R) — A bomb killed four people in a coastal area of Algeria and security forces killed 16 Islamist guerrillas, Algerian newspapers said on Sunday.

Two unnamed senior army officials were killed on Saturday in a helicopter crash caused by technical failure, the official Algerian news agency APS said.

It said the pilot and co-pilot also died while six other passengers on the flight — described as a liaison mission — were injured when the craft came down north of Bechar near the Moroccan border.

Liberte newspaper said the latest bomb went off at a cafe in Zeralda, some 20 kilometres west of Algiers, on Saturday, killing four people. It was the third bomb explosion in Algeria within a few hours.

Five people died and 12 were wounded in two bombings on Saturday in Mehalma area, in Algiers, and in Blida, south of the Algerian capital, according to official statements.

Late in January, a bomb killed at least eight people in Zeralda when a trio of junior European Union ministers was winding up a visit to Algiers over the massacre of civilians.

An EU parliamentary delegation is due to arrive in Algiers on Sunday in an attempt to engage Algerians in a broad dialogue over the six-year-old civil strife.

Saturday's bombings came hours after Prime Minister Ahmad Ouyahia told an 11-hour special session of parliament that Islamist rebels were "retreating" in the face of more forces being deployed by the government and increased involvement of civilians backing the authorities.

Mr. Ouyahia, whose government was under fire in the 380-seat National Assembly over its failure to stop the massacres, pledged his government's fight against rebels would reach a new stage in the next few weeks.

Security forces killed 16 rebels near Algiers and in the western province of Chlef on Friday and Saturday in the latest military operations against guerrillas, said El Watan and La Tribune newspapers.

Eleven of the guerrillas were shot dead during a 10-hour gun battle in Sidi Moussa area, south of Algiers, they said.

The newspapers said most of the 11 rebels were senior members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) who were trying to rebuild its grassroots support after an army offensive on its bases in the past months.

Western estimates say more than 65,000 people — rebels, civilians and security forces members — have been killed in Algeria's violence since 1992, when the authorities scrapped a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

A boy reads the Koran on Sunday in the courtyard of the Imam Moussa Kazem Mosque in Baghdad during the holiday celebrating the Feb. 8, 1963, revolution. On Feb. 8, 1963, the ruling Ba'ath Party took power for the first time for a period of eight months. The United States and Britain have threatened to attack Iraq if it does not give unconditional access to U.N. inspectors, who are charged with overseeing the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (AP photo)

Israeli cabinet discusses Iraq crisis, preparations for attack continue

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli cabinet held new consultations Sunday on the Iraq crisis as military and health authorities continued preparations for a possible Iraqi attack with chemical or biological weapons.

Officials said security officials had been invited by Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu to attend the regular weekly cabinet meeting Sunday to discuss contingency plans if the United States carries out its threat to launch air strikes against Iraq.

Mr. Netanyahu reaffirmed on Friday that Israel "reserves the right" to retaliate if Iraq fires missiles at the Jewish state during any military confrontation.

Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles with conventional warheads at Israel during the 1991 Gulf war and there are fears Baghdad could response similarly if attacked by the U.S.-led forces, possibly using chemical or biological warheads.

Washington has said it will carry out a "substantial" attack on Iraq if Baghdad persists in barring U.N. inspectors for sites suspected of hiding banned long-range missiles or chemical and biological weapons.

Mr. Netanyahu acknowledged that the chances Iraq would again fire missiles at Israel were "very low" given that most of Baghdad's missiles have been destroyed since the Gulf war.

But he said it was the government's responsibility to prepare for any possible attack.

Thousands of Israelis have flocked to army distribution centres over the past 10 days to replace or pick up gas masks and other protective equipment against chemical or biological attack.

The army's civil defence unit announced Sunday that it was opening seven new centres to distribute the protective equipment, bringing the total number of outlets to 37.

The unit also opened a site on Internet concerning the Iraqi crisis, notably providing details on the availability and use of gas masks, how to set up sealed "safe rooms" in homes and the location of bomb shelters.

The army announced that all hospitals must install special air ventilation and filtering systems to secure operating rooms in the case of chemical or biological attack.

Meanwhile, Israel was expecting air shipments this week of some 200,000 additional gas masks as well as vaccine and antibiotics to combat anthrax, which Iraq is believed to have loaded into missile warheads.

The United States and several European governments offered the gas masks after it became apparent last week that Israel lacked sufficient masks for some 300,000 foreign workers as well as tourists in the country.

Lebanese civilian injured in Israeli shelling

TYRE (AFP) — A Lebanese civilian was injured in Israeli shelling of a village in south Lebanon on Sunday, police said.

Mahmud Tohme, 17, suffered injuries to the legs and a concussion when a mortar round fell near him in the village of Yater, police said.

He was taken to a hospital in Tyre.

Police said a 78-year-old villager, Mohammad Kurani, suffered a heart attack due to fright from the shelling and died during transfer to a hospital.

According to police, some 20 mortar rounds fell on Yater, located three-kilometres north of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in south Lebanon.

The casualties bring the number of Lebanese civilians injured in fighting in south Lebanon since the beginning of the year to two dead and nine wounded, according to the police.

Under the terms of an April 1996 cease-fire that ended an Israeli offensive against Hizbollah in south Lebanon, both Hizbollah and Israel are charged with avoiding civilians casualties in their conflict in the region.

Hizbollah spearheads Lebanese resistance to Israel's occupation of the border zone in south Lebanon.

More than a million Iraqi volunteers undergoing military training — official

BAGHDAD (AFP) — More than a million Iraqi volunteers have been undergoing military training since the beginning of February in anticipation of any confrontation with the United States, an official of Iraq's ruling Ba'ath Party said Sunday.

"The number of those now training exceeds one million," the official told AFP, adding that this was the number Iraqi officials had hoped to raise.

"The [American] warships, aircraft carriers, and submarines have crossed tens of thousands of kilometres to destroy our houses and kill our children, so we have no other choice but to defy them with all our forces," said another Ba'ath official, Hammed Said.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has called on Iraqis to take military training in preparation for a "jihad" [holy war] aimed at forcing the United States to lift the seven-year-old U.N. sanctions on Iraq. Male volunteers have been receiving three hours of training per day, while female volunteers have been getting two hours. The training, which began Feb. 1, is due to last three months.

Top Iraqi officials, including Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan and Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Hamza Zubeidi, have been shown on Iraqi television during the last days lined up in rank with the other volunteers and obeying the instructions of an army officer.

The United States and Britain have threatened to use force against Iraq if diplomatic efforts fail to make Baghdad open all its suspected arms sites to U.N. weapons inspectors.

Iraq has been under U.N. sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Lifting of the sanctions is subject to U.N. arms inspectors confirming Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction or long-range missiles.

Israeli policy could spark new uprising — Palestinian official

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A senior Palestinian official warned Israel on Sunday it could face a new uprising if it continued to renege on signed peace accords and pushed ahead with construction of Jewish settlements.

Yasser Abed Rabbo, information minister in the Palestinian National Authority, said progress in the peace process was impossible under the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

"I can say that an explosion is possible," Mr. Abed Rabbo told state-run Abu Dhabi television when asked whether he expected a new intifada — the eight-year uprising that erupted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1987.

"It will be an explosion of the Palestinian people with all its groups and forces regardless of any difference in views.

"This is because of the daily settlement policies of Netanyahu and his government, his reneging on signed agreements, repression of Palestinians and attempts to Judaise Jerusalem," said Mr. Abed Rabbo.

"These attempts are taking place in a frantic way, as Israeli racist policy is showing its face more and more, and American impotence has become clearer than ever."

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has also warned of a fresh uprising if there is no breakthrough in the peace process, blaming Israel for the current deadlock.

The threat drew an angry reaction from Mr. Netanyahu, who warned Israel would respond forcefully to any violent actions by Palestinians.

"It is impossible to make progress in the peace process under the current policies of Netanyahu," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

He urged the European Union to "go further than political contacts and statements" to break the 11-month stalemate in the peace process.

Kuwait calls up its military reserves

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The Kuwaiti defence ministry has decided to call up its army reserves, according to the official Kuwaiti news agency, KUNA.

The agency reported late Saturday that Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Al Sabah authorised army chief of staff, Ali Al Mumin, to "call up the army reserves due to the crisis provoked by the Iraqi regime." The decision came as the emirate's government said Saturday it would soon begin distributing gas masks to the population to use in the event of an attack by Iraq. The Kuwaiti parliament called Saturday for continued diplomatic efforts to peacefully solve the standoff between Iraq and the United Nations over weapons inspections.

The United States and Britain have threatened to use force if diplomatic efforts fail to convince Iraq to open all its suspected weapons sites to U.N. arms inspectors.

Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990 but were ousted seven months later by an international military coalition led by the United States.

Lifting of U.N. sanctions slapped on Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait is tied to arms inspectors confirming Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction.

UAE arrests 250 illegal aliens in surprise raid

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) said on Sunday it had rounded up 250 illegal migrants in a surprise raid on suspected labour sites as part of a crackdown against violators of immigration laws.

The 250 foreigners, mostly South Asians, were arrested during inspection of the industrial area of Musaffah just outside Abu Dhabi city.

"It was part of continuous campaigns to ensure no expatriates are violating the immigration laws in the UAE," said Hader Ben Khalaf Al Muhairi, director of the immigration and naturalisation department.

The crackdown followed the departure of nearly 172,000 illegal migrants from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other Asian countries in 1996 in a four-month amnesty announced before the enforcement of stiffer laws.

Around 5,000 illegal migrants were also rounded up in 1997 and deported after being punished, Mr. Muhairi told the official news agency WAM.

Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Gulf states have offered similar amnesty programmes to weed out illegal aliens and end turmoil in their labour markets.

Mr. Muhairi said 67 tourism companies in the northern UAE emirates had been suspended for violating immigration laws, including the illegal sale of residence visas to expatriates and promoting indecent acts. He was referring to prostitutes from Russia and other countries brought in by those firms.

"Several beggars, who had come here as tourists, have also been arrested during the inspection campaigns," he said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 ....Peter Rabbit
16:30 ....French Cartoon Films
18:00 ....Riding High
18:30 ....Drama — Neighbours
19:00 ....Le Journal
19:15 French Documentary Programme
19:30 ....News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Hope and Gloria
20:00 Documentary — Perspective
20:30 ....American Chart Show
21:10 Drama — Burned Bridge
22:00 ....News in English
22:30 ....Emergency Room
23:15 ..Documentary — Cosmos

PRAYER TIMES

05:02 ....Fajr
06:20 ....(Sunrise) Duha
11:50 ....Dhuhr
14:53 ....'Asr
17:20 ....Maghreb
18:38 ....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunication Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Cold weather conditions will prevail, skies cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds northwesterly moderate. Rain is expected to fall Tuesday evening. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman	06/11
Aqaba	09/20
Deserts	05/13
Jordan Valley	10/18

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 84 per cent, Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab ...602507
Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb 875748
Dr. Jamal Jbarah 847351
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir ..278770
Al Quds pharmacy ....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ya'coub Al Khatib 991772
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre....637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency....199
Rescue Police....192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade....617101
Blood Bank....775121
Highway Police....843402
Traffic Police....896390
Public Security Dept....630321
Hotel Complaints....5605800
Price Complaints....5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints ..897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs....5661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co....636381
RJ Flight Information ..44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Luzmila 630195
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity....644281/6
Akileh Maternity....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity ...642362
Malhas, J. Amman. 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital ..5667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali ...5666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir....775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital 5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ....(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital ....(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ....(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ....(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ....(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ....(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08-152700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:40 ....Sanaa (RJ)
08:35 ....Jeddah (RJ)
09:45 ....New Delhi (RJ)
09:50 ....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:10 ....Beirut, Damascus (RJ)
16:00 ....Wahran (add) (RJ)
16:20 ....Cairo (RJ)
16:40 ....Algiers (add) (RJ)
16:45 ....London (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:05 ....Kuwait (RJ)
19:00 ....Bangkok (RJ)
19:15 ....Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
02:50 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights
04:15 ....London (BA)
09:15 ....Cairo (MS)
12:00 ....Khartoum (SD)
13:25 ....Bahrain (GF)
14:30 ....Doha (QR)
15:05 ....Vienna (OS)
16:00 ....Dubai (EK)
18:00 ....Istanbul (SD)
20:00 ....Tel Aviv (LY)
21:10 ....Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30 ....Athens (OA)
01:25 ....Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:05 ....Tel Aviv (RW)
07:25 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
07:15 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
09:50 ....Aqaba (RW)
11:10 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
12:00 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
21:20 ....Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45 ....Wahran (add) (RJ)
06:20 ....Beirut (RJ)
07:00 ....Algiers (add) (RJ)
11:30 ....Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:05 ....Kuwait (RJ)
12:10 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30 ....Cairo (RJ)
20:15 ....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:40 ....Damascus (RJ)
20:45 ....Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15 ....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 ....Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
06:00 ....Istanbul (TK)
08:25 ....London (BA)
10:30 ....Al 'Arish (PF)
10:30 ....Cairo (MS)
13:20 ....Istanbul (SD)
14:15 ....Bahrain (GF)
15:50 ....Doha (QR)
15:50 ....Vienna (OS)
17:00 ....Damascus, Dubai (EK)
19:00 ....Khartoum (SD)
21:20 ....Tel Aviv (LY)
23:53 ....Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:25 ....Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 ....Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW)
05:30 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
06:50 ....Tel Aviv (RW)
07:55 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
08:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
10:20 ....Aqaba (RW)
11:40 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
20:30 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 ....Aqaba (RW)

Queen Alia remembered

TODAY MARKS the 21st anniversary of the tragic death of Queen Alia, who died at the age of 28 in a helicopter crash while returning from an inspection trip to a hospital in Tafileh.

Queen Alia, born Alia Baha Uddin Toukan, was married to His Majesty King Hussein in December 1971. They had two children, Their Royal Highnesses Princess Haya and Prince Ali, and they adopted Abir Muheissen in 1972.

Clipping coupons for 'fun' nets car for lucky reader

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In one stroke of luck, Evelyn Madduck from Sri Lanka made more money than she did during the ten years she has worked in Amman.

The Suzuki car she won yesterday in the Jordan Times lottery is worth JD12,000, the bulk of which Mrs. Maddock and her husband will send to their five children in Sri Lanka.

"I will be calling my children for the first time from Jordan to tell them that something so good has happened to us," said Mrs. Maddock, who works as a domestic helper.

When she was told that she won the lottery, she said, "I had to pinch myself to believe the news was true."

"I couldn't tell if I was awake or dreaming," said Mrs. Maddock, adding that she would be selling the car in the next two days because she needs the money more than she needs the car. Besides, she said, neither she nor her husband know how to drive anyway.

An avid reader of the Jordan Times for seven years, she carefully cut out the 20 coupons needed to enter the competition, even though she never really believed she would win.

"I didn't tell my husband or my employers because I never dreamed something like this could happen," she said. "I did it for fun."

She admitted that she may have a lucky streak. "I am sometimes lucky. I won a lottery in Sri Lanka once also," pointing out, however, that it was a very modest amount.

Mrs. Maddock said she and her husband, who works here as a contractor, did not plan to celebrate. "We will not go out for dinner and spend our money," she said.

Instead, she will open a local bank account, which will have a "substantial" amount of money.

"It will be her own account," said her 46-year-old husband.

"Because I can handle money better," quipped Mrs. Maddock.

In two years, after Mr. Maddock finishes his contract, they will travel to Sri Lanka for about three months. But they insist that they will be returning to Amman to live here again.

"I like my employers very much. This country is very good and I am very happy here," said Mrs. Maddock.

One last thing...the Jordan Time staff shared the celebration with the couple, treating themselves to the traditional Arab sweets that Mr. and Mrs. Maddock brought to the newspaper.

Evelyn Maddock

UNDP to donate $1.5 million for social security plan studies

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced Sunday that it will donate $1.5 million to help finance feasibility studies for the implementation of the government-sponsored social security package plan benefiting underdeveloped regions of Jordan.

UNDP Resident Representative Jurgen Lissner said the U.N. will back the Jordanian government's 10-year plan to deal with poverty and unemployment problems.

He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the UNDP will ask international donor organisations to extend assistance to Jordan's plan.

Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf last May announced that the government was implementing the JD431 million social security package plan over several years. Of this total, JD173 million will go to the refugee camps, home to 228,000 refugees.

The minister said the balance will benefit the underdeveloped urban and rural regions, with JD43 million to be spent in the first three years.

Mr. Lissner told Petra that the feasibility studies which the UNDP will finance are necessary to demonstrate Jordan's need to donor organisations and foreign countries.

He said the UNDP is currently financing the training of Jordanian personnel to implement the plan and raise public awareness about its benefits to the Kingdom.

The UNDP has already created special units within the ministries to follow up on the procedures connected with the social security plan, Mr. Lissner noted.

According to Dr. Khalaf, the two-phase plan envisages improving the infrastructure in the refugee camps and initiating small-size income-generating projects to create jobs.

Abla Amawi, head of the UNDP Programmes Department, told Petra that the plan also entails restructuring the National Aid Fund (NAF), as well as providing loans for small projects and training family heads in trades to help them earn a living.

Dr. Amawi said that in addition to the UNDP, Germany, the U.S. and the World Bank have pledged financial support for the plan.

GHARAIBEH RECEIVES UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT: University of Jordan (UJ) President Fawzi Gharaibeh and UJ Vice President Sami Khasawneh on Sunday receive McGill University (Montreal) President Bernard Shapiro, who is currently on a visit to the Kingdom. Their talks focused on means of promoting bilateral ties in educational fields between Jordan and Canada (Photo courtesy of UJ)

Deputies petition government to reconsider privatisation policy

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Lower House deputies petitioned the government on Sunday to reconsider its privatisation policies and urged it only to sell public entities that could not be salvaged.

According to Deputy Nazih Ammarin, 48 lawmakers signed a petition asking the government not to sell successful public institutions, to fully investigate the reasons behind losses incurred by other entities destined for privatisation and to urgently submit draft laws that regulate monopoly and the privatisation process.

Deputies also raised many issues such as the recent attack on two pharmacists in Amman, nuclear radiation from the Dimona reactor in south Israel, the recent death of a Jordanian citizen in Tel Aviv and the Jordanian embassy's handling of the affair, as well as other local concerns.

Also during yesterday's session, the House resumed its discussion of the customs law, which was carried over from the 12th Parliament. A total of 228 articles of the law's 258 have now been endorsed.

French foreign ministry official arrives in Amman for talks on U.N.-Iraq crisis

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A senior French foreign ministry official arrived here Sunday as part of France's endeavours to reach a peaceful solution to the standoff between Baghdad and Washington over Iraqi weapons inspections, a French diplomat said.

The diplomat, who asked not to be named, said the head of the North Africa and Middle East Department, Jean-Claude Cousseran, is expected to hold talks with Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh.

"Mr. Cousseran will brief the Jordanian officials on France's peace initiatives and listen to the Jordanian government's view on ways to solve the problem," the diplomat told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Cousseran, who arrived here from Beirut, was part of a four-member team, headed by the secretary general of France's foreign ministry, Bertrand Dufourcq, that visited Baghdad last week.

Mr. Dufourcq joined Russian envoy Victor Posuvalyuk in talks to convince Iraqi officials to grant free access to disputed sites, including the presidential palaces.

Iraq reportedly has eased its hardline position and said it will allow U.N. inspectors free access to dozens of sites in Baghdad.

On Thursday, Mr. Dufourcq and his team left the Iraqi capital and started a tour of several Arab states to formulate an initiative to solve the deadlock peacefully. He has already visited Syria, Kuwait, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

"It is difficult to say that we will have a successful peace initiative but France will remain an advocate for a diplomatic solution to the crisis," said the French diplomat.

Mr. Cousseran is expected to leave Jordan on Monday, the diplomat said.

Minister reports incident of child abuse at government-run orphanage

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamser has revealed that two foster mothers employed by Al Hussein Social Institution have been suspended from work and referred to the local authorities after they admitted to burning two young girls to prevent them from wetting their beds.

A report published in the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm on Sunday stated that upon being informed of the incident by the institutions director, the minister formed a special investigative committee, sacked the two women and referred them to the police.

Dr. Mamser told the newspaper that the two foster mothers, who were in training, had used a heated piece of iron to burn the two girls, aged two and two-and-a-half years, in a bid to frighten them from wetting the bed while asleep.

According to Mo'men Haddidi, head of the National Institute for Forensic Medicine, who examined the children, the "two suffered burns in the skin surrounding the genitalia."

The institution, which is under the direct charge of the Ministry of Social Development, cares for orphaned children.

According to the minister, the committee heard the testimony of an 11-year-old orphaned girl about the incident, and later, the two foster mothers admitted to committing the act.

Dr. Mamser said the hot iron did not cause much bodily harm to the two girls but the effect was more psychological than physical.

The minister said he would not hesitate to impose the strictest penalties on anyone trying to harm children, whether at government-run or private institutions.

He threatened to close any society committing similar acts against children.

Women's movement united in favour of quota in Parliament

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For the first time in its young history, the women's movement stands united in favour of a women's quota in the Lower House.

A petition to collect one million signatures in favour of allocating 20 per cent of the Lower House's 80 seats to women has been very successful since it was begun several weeks ago, activists say, though official figures are not yet available.

"For the first time, all 80 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in Jordan in the field of women's development are united," noted Salwa Nasser, coordinator for NGOs at the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW).

Women's activists have not set a deadline for their campaign, but they will have to mobilise the public and decision-makers before the government presents its new draft elections law, which His Majesty King Hussein included in the programme for the current Parliament.

The draft is being prepared by the current government, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has announced on several occasions, but analysts say it is unlikely that the Cabinet will submit it to Parliament before the end of the current session, in March.

Many women who were against the idea in principle in the beginning now think that, though not the best system, the women's quota is necessary to overcome obstacles in their conservative society.

"Most NGOs were surprised by the result of the [Nov. 4, 1997] elections, and the quota seems now the only way for women to reach Parliament in the year 2001," Ms. Nasser said.

They agree that after the disappointing results of last year's general elections, in which none of the 17 women candidates won, the introduction of a women's quota seems indispensable in overcoming the traditional and cultural factors hindering their full and active participation in political life.

"The painful results of the elections had the positive effect of uniting the women's front around the quota principle," said Amal Sabbagh, secretary general at the JNCW.

Women's groups have been and still are soul-searching on the reasons behind their defeat in the last elections.

Studies are being conducted, mainly by the Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre, which was leading and coordinating women candidates' efforts during the elections campaign.

But, apart from incidental factors in the failure of each woman candidate's campaign, "we know that there are historical reasons that worked and still work against women," Ms. Sabbagh pointed out.

"Though we are now equal in front of the elections law, Jordanian women only won their right to vote in 1974."

Women's groups stress that the women's quota — or positive discrimination, as they prefer to call it — would be a temporary one, effective only for three consecutive elections.

But battle being waged by Jordanian women for a quota promises to be fierce, as the government, many parliamentarians, and political parties have already rejected it.

In an interview with the Jordan Times last month, Dr. Majali harshly criticised the women's quota principle.

"Which parts of Jordan will elect a woman and which cannot? Is it possible to set a quota for Amman, and not for Karak, Tafileh or Irbid? How can we have a quota for certain constituencies with only two seats?" the prime minister asked.

Women responded that, once the principle of positive discrimination is introduced, several different mechanisms for its implementation can be sorted out.

Opposition to the women's quota also seems deep and widespread among the ranks of the opposition.

While the Islamists reject the women's quota in the frame of their opposition to all quotas, including religious and ethnic, most leftists believe that women should continue campaigning for public support in order to reach Parliament without a quota.

"Women have to get out of the kitchen to the political parties, fight for themselves in order to become part of the political game," said Khalil Haddadin, secretary general of the Jordanian Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party.

The only exception to the rule seems to be the Jordanian Communist Party (JCP), which proudly announced that their long-standing unwritten rule of electing women to at least 20 per cent of the party's higher cadres and committees was reaffirmed during the party's last internal elections, in December 1997.

"Since the party was established, women's development issues have always been a priority in our agenda," said Layla Naffa', one of seven women in the 30-member JCP Central Committee.

But many doubt that the women's quota will be on the agenda of opinion and decision-makers, or the Jordanian public at large.

"Our only hope is that change will be introduced from above, and that His Majesty King Hussein will support our struggle," said one woman activist.

what's going on

FILMS

* Two films entitled "Mr. Bean" and "Post Man Pat" at the British Council, Jabal Amman on Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. and Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. respectively.

* "Pauline à la plage" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

LECTURES

* "German-Arab Relations after 1945" (in English) by Dr. Ali Mahafza at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman on Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 6:30 p.m.

* "Jordanian Economic Status and Future Horizons" (in Arabic) by Dr. Munir Hamarneh at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Valentine's Day bazaar at Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Feb. 14.

Closing arguments presented in trial of three charged with smuggling arms to West Bank

By Rana Husseini
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Prosecutor in the trial of three men accused of plotting acts of sabotage and smuggling weapons to the West Bank asked the court Sunday to convict the men on all charges.

Ismat Shukri, 35, and Ali A. and Mohammad M., both being tried in absentia, are charged with manufacturing explosives in 1995 with the intent to use them against tourists and smuggling weapons to the West Bank from 1995 to 1997 via the Dead Sea.

In his 11-page closing argument, Lieutenant Colonel Mahmoud Obeidat defended the prosecution's investigation procedures, which were repeatedly challenged by the defence team during the four-month trial.

"The prosecution has presented strong and consistent evidence that the defendants plotted attacks against tourists and smuggled weapons to the West Bank," he told the court.

In addition, Lt. Col. Obeidat said Mr. Shukri confessed willingly to smuggling weapons to the West Bank.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, Mr. Shukri manufactured explosives in 1995 and hid them in his house.

According to the charge sheet, in 1996, the two defendants, having known each other for five years, met with the third, Mohammad M., and decided to export machine guns to the West Bank by rubber boats via the Dead Sea.

Mr. Shukri was arrested by security forces on Sept. 20, 1997, after the authorities received a tip that he possessed explosives and was smuggling weapons.

At the end of the 30-minute court session, Defence Attorney Salam Shunar, one of several lawyers defending Mr. Shukri, asked the court for time to prepare the defence's closing arguments.

The military court, headed by Judge Yousef Faouri and including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Fawaz Boqour, agreed and adjourned the session to Feb. 16.

New leader of Armenia to put Karabakh on the backburner

YEREVAN (AFP) — Armenia's new master Robert Kocharian, a local hero for his tough line on Nagorno-Karabakh, paradoxically intends to set the problems of that enclave aside to concentrate on bringing democracy and a market economy to his cash-strapped country.

Mr. Kocharian last week won the resignation of President Levon Ter-Petrossian in a dispute over policy on Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian-populated territory in Azerbaijan which has won de facto independence with Yerevan's support.

Mr. Ter-Petrossian's departure was triggered by the defection of half his ruling coalition to an opposition group hostile to his support for a phased settlement for the mountain territory.

Mr. Kocharian, who led the separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh before becoming Armenian prime minister, has pushed for a "package" peace deal, arguing that "all issues must be discussed simultaneously, from the beginning."

The peace talks have stalled over the separatists' refusal to hand back adjacent parts of Azerbaijan which they conquered in the six-year war that ended with a ceasefire in 1994, unless they get full sovereignty guarantees from Baku.

But unlike Mr. Ter-Petrossian, Mr. Kocharian, 43, seems to be in no hurry to settle the problem, which is still hindering Armenia's economic development. "Nagorno-Karabakh is not Armenia's only fundamental question," he says.

For Mr. Kocharian, the country also needs a proper legal foundation, in order to attract the foreign investors it so badly needs and boost its moribund economy.

His immediate task is to see that the presidential elections to be held on March 16 are free and fair, he says. He is acting president in the meantime, and is vague on whether he will run for elected office next month.

"Kocharian's objective is to bring the country to legality, hold a fair election and give parliament legitimacy," commented a Western diplomat here.

The September 1996 presidential poll which kept Mr. Ter-Petrossian in power was considered fraudulent by both his opponents and international observers, while the general elections the previous year were described as free, but not fair.

Since becoming prime minister in March last year, Mr. Kocharian applied himself to saving the budget and improving the collection of taxes in order to fight against corruption.

Analysts say the result was positive.

While enjoying popular support over Nagorno-Karabakh, and turning general discontent to his advantage, Mr. Kocharian has no political power base as "leader of the opposition."

He is officially backed by no political party, and analysts and politicians are still wary about his democratic credentials, although Bagrat Sadoyan of the Centre for Strategic Studies think tank noted that he had left the press alone since becoming head of government.

"It's an Armenian tradition; men with a strong personality are more popular than politicians," said Mr. Sadoyan, while the Western diplomat said he had managed to do what other leaders had failed: bring the country together.

But for many his image is still that of the warrior chief, following his successes against the Azerbaijanis as "president" of Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Up till 1994 I was president of a country at war," he says. "Now I have become the president of a country which has restored peace."

Asked if he is Armenia's new "strongman", he smiled enigmatically before saying: "Considering what I have done these past 10 years, you can't call me weak."

Britain's Prince Charles accepts flowers from former sex workers from India at an institution in Kathmandu (Reuters photo)

Prince Charles visits Nepalese women rescued from prostitution

KATHMANDU (AFP) — Prince Charles Sunday paid a visit to a shelter for Nepalese women and girls rescued from brothels in India and shook hands with a group who are HIV positive, officials said.

The shelter, set up with British aid, houses 135 destitute women and girls, giving them training and education so that they can start a new life.

A management official at centre told AFP that 50 of them were rescued from Bombay and other brothels in India. Some fourteen of the women who are HIV positive discussed with Prince Charles the dangers of HIV and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

According to officials, there are more than 100,000 Nepalese women trapped in the flesh trade in India, after being sold abroad for about $1,000.

Most come from the poor regions of north and western Nepal, where the peoples economic conditions are very bad.

"In the Sindhuli district 140 kilometres northeast of Kathmandu, some ethnic groups celebrate the birth of a baby girl as they consider she will be a good source of income when she grows up.

Young match makers roam the villages, and parents are paid up to $300 for their daughters and told the girls will be employed either in the film industry or in good jobs in India, said Anuradha Koirala, executive chairman of the Maiti-Nepal refuge.

"Once the girls land in the brothels it is not possible for them to be rescued unless they are thrown out by the match makers after contracting HIV or AIDS," an official said.

There are several Women Welfare Societies in Nepal working to rescue the women from the brothels, with the help of the Indian police. Up to 500 women were rescued last year, and there are negotiations between the two countries on how to stop the trade.

Earlier the prince had visited a British-aided school where he chatted with some of the boys and girls about their studies and unveiled a plaque to declare the school open.

Later Sunday the prince flew for Pokhara, where he was received by King Birendra and Queen Aishworya at their mini palace built on the banks of the Phewa Lake.

He was due to fly later to Besi Sahar and Lamjung two Gurkha villages to inspect some of the British-aided rural development projects and the Gurkha Welfare Camp.

Prince Charles was scheduled to return Kathmandu later Sunday for a dinner to be hosted by the British ambassador.

Okinawa holds mayoral poll on U.S. military heliport

TOKYO (AFP) — Voting ended in the Okinawan city of Nago Sunday in a mayoral race sparked by the proposed construction of an offshore U.S. military heliport, officials said.

Nago's 38,300 voters are to elect a new mayor following the resignation of Tetsuya Higa in December after he gave his approval for the heliport despite a majority "no" vote in a referendum.

Voter turnout at the city's 17 balloting stations was estimated at 82.4 per cent.

Final results are not expected until late Sunday.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto declined to comment on the local poll.

"It is what Nago citizens decide," Jiji Press quoted the premier as telling reporters at his residence.

There are three candidates — Yoshikazu Tamaki from the Social Democratic Party, Tateo Kishimoto supported by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and Kiyoshi Tsujiyama with backing from smaller groups.

Votes were expected to be closely divided between Mr. Tamaki, a 49-year-old former Okinawa assembly member opposing the heliport, and Mr. Kishimoto, a 54-year-old former deputy mayor of Nago promoting the project.

"I would be very happy if I can post a landslide victory and show the local opinion (opposing the heliport) clearly," Mr. Tamaki told reporters as he cast his ballot.

Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota, who announced his opposition to the heliport Friday, backed Mr. Tamaki.

Mr. Tamaki was also supported by the Japan Communist Party and the Democratic Party, which was established in 1996 with liberal forces.

Mr. Kishimoto said when casting his vote that he had done his best and would "leave the rest to heaven."

A Tamaki victory could put a freeze on the plan to build the floating heliport and reduce bases on Okinawa, while if Mr. Kishimoto should win it would provide Tokyo with a foothold for working towards the realisation of the project.

The heliport was a precondition for the U.S. Marine Corps quitting Futenma air base in Ginowan, Okinawa, to reduce the U.S. military presence on the island where the 1995 rape of a 12-year-old girl by three U.S. servicemen unleashed a tide of anger.

Okinawa accounts for 0.6 per cent of Japan's total land, but hosts about three quarters of U.S. military facilities in the country and some 27,000 of the 47,000 American troops in Japan.

In the Nago referendum on Dec. 21, 16,639 voters rejected the construction plan against 14,267 who approved it.

While opponents to the heliport cite environmental concerns and more U.S. military intrusion in their lives, others support the plan because of the central government's promise to take measures to boost the regional economy.

If the heliport goes ahead it will be built above the sea east of Nago, about 60 kilometres northeast of Okinawa's prefectural capital of Naha, and inside or outside the coral reef off the sub-tropical coast.

A television camera recently caught the image of a dugong, seen as an endangered species, cruising in the area, fuelling protests from environmental activists.

The structure, measuring 1,600 metres by 500 metres, is considered necessary to close down the Futenma station within seven years in line with a 1996 agreement to return more than 20 per cent of the Okinawan land occupied by the U.S. military.

Rwandan army kill 6 Hutu rebels, two soldiers injured

KIGALI (AFP) — The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) killed six Hutu militiamen and extremist former troops in the northern Kinigi region, the private Rwandan news agency ARI reported Saturday.

"There was a confrontation Friday with Hutu militia in Kagano, in the region of Kinigi," the army's spokesman Major Emmanuel Ndahiro was quoted as saying, adding that the army had been tipped off by the local population.

Two soldiers were injured during the operation, the report said.

Meanwhile an army officer was arrested charged with committing an "operational error" during the attack by Hutu rebels that killed 34 civilians and injured 13 in Rwanda's northern Ruhengeri province, ARI reported.

The officer, head of the RPA army in the region, was arrested for not intervening during the attack. His superiors were also being questioned, Maj. Ndahiro told ARI.

A rebel band of undisclosed size, consisting of troops of the ex-Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and Interahamwe militiamen, raided Nkuli, 15 kilometres from Ruhengeri town, Wednesday night, killing 30 people on the spot. Four later died of their wounds.

The assailants, who were armed with guns, knives and farming hoes, blocked off the main road between Ruhengeri and Gisenyi on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) before their assault, the region's prefect said.

The Hutu rebels fled into to nearby forest after the attack.

The army attacked rebels in and around Nkuli Friday. "We took the enemy by surprise, and we suffered no losses," Maj. Ndahiro said.

Attacks have been stepped up notably since the beginning of the year. At the end of last month, some 300 rebels killed eight civilians and lost two of their own number during another attack on Kinigi. On Jan. 14, the Tutsi-led army said it had killed 24 rebels, who had been denounced by local people as they retreated into the hills.

Many armed Rwandan Hutus fled with hundreds of thousands of refugees into the DRC, then Zaire, as the Tutsis won in July 1994 after the killing of between 500,000 and 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Hutu extremists.

Most of the refugees have since returned, while undisclosed but large numbers are reported by humanitarian organisations to have died directly or indirectly in ethnic strife and its effects across the troubled region.

Aftershocks claim more victims in northern Afghanistan

DUSHANBE (AFP) — Two major aftershocks claimed more victims in northern Afghanistan's quake-stricken Takhar province, an Afghan embassy spokesman in the Tajik capital said Sunday.

The spokesman told AFP that the aftershocks late Saturday and early Sunday claimed at least 250 more lives and injured 50 people.

International aid workers said as many as 3,300 people may have been killed and more than 15,000 left homeless as a result of the initial quake which struck Wednesday.

Two top United Nations relief workers arrived in Tajikistan Sunday to coordinate the delivery of humanitarian aid to quake victims.

They planned to tour the epicentre of the quake and its surrounding areas by helicopter to assess victims' needs, but poor weather conditions forced the flight to be delayed.

The U.N. representatives said blankets, food, medicine and tents were already arriving in the northern Afghan city of Feyzbad from where they would be delivered to the stricken region.

Also, supplies stored in the war-shattered capital Kabul were being prepared for despatch to the area.

Sunday ICRC and Red Cross Federation workers were flying to the area, to coordinate the early stages of what looks to become a massive relief operation.

The European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) announced Saturday it had set aside a fund of $2.2 million to be made available immediately to the relief effort.

Oscar nominees to be announced after vast publicity blitz

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Hollywood is counting the votes for Oscar nominees to be announced Tuesday, culminating a frenetic, months-long advertising campaign.

Movie studios, which always begin their pitches with the simple phrase "For your consideration," have spent millions in their attempt to persuade the 5,173 voting members of the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences to give their films and actors a shot at winning the fabled golden statue.

Whole pages of Daily Variety and The Hollywood Reporter, publications that are required reading for the entertainment industry, have been loaded for months with colour advertisements touting the movies that producers hope will be in the running for the Oscars.

The vast advertisement effort is geared at refreshing the memories of the Academy voters — or, sometimes, to get them to watch their movies, given that there are 275 movies eligible for the 70th annual Academy Awards.

"Nothing changes the mind of the voter if they didn't like the film," said Tony Angellotti, who heads Miramax's aggressive media campaign.

A media campaign however "might remind them if they liked it, and what did they liked about it," Mr. Angellotti said.

With this in mind, marketing executives began mobilising early this year to decide which movies they would throw their marketing and advertisement efforts behind.

Paramount began its publicity blitz with "In and Out" in the Oct. 7 edition of Daily Variety. Since then, the publication has pumped out 440 pages of publicity in its daily edition and 160 in its weekly edition. Each full-colour page costs $10,000.

From its Beverly Hills headquarters, the Academy keeps a close eye on the publicity campaigns to ensure that studios distribute only material that will help members judge the artistic and technical merits of a film.

After a brief Christmas break, the "for your consideration" announcements began again on Jan. 9, the day the Academy sent out ballots to its members. The deadline for returning the ballots was Jan. 30.

The large number of movies that can be considered for nomination has forced the studios to focus mainly on well-reviewed films. The goal is to get the movie they support in as one of the five final contenders in the most important 24 categories in the competition.

Film critic groups both in Los Angeles and New York heaped awards on "L.A. Confidential," and Warner Brothers picked up the cue and vigorously promoted the movie as an Oscar favourite . . . until "Titanic" appeared to be the runaway favourite.

"Titanic" swept past "L.A. Confidential," with its backers spending hugely on promotions, both for audiences and to get Academy members' attention. Efforts for both films could pay off when the Oscars are announced March 23.

The Wings of the Dove (Miramax), In and Out (Paramount), As Good As It Gets (TriStar/Columbia), Amistad (DreamWorks), Wag The Dog (New Line Cinema), Titanic (Paramount/Fox) and The Apostle (October Films) have all been heavily promoted in Daily Variety.

Kashmir bomb blast kills 5 of family

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Five members of the same family were killed in a bomb explosion in India's troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Sunday.

They said a bomb went off in a house that belonged to a separatist guerrilla Saturday night near Chatrgul village of Kangan area, about 35 km northeast of the state's summer capital Srinagar.

"Three women and two men of a family were killed in the explosion. The family belongs to a Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen militant," a police official told Reuters.

Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen is fighting for Kashmir to be merged with neighbouring Pakistan.

The house was completely destroyed in the explosion, police said.

In another incident, Indian paramilitary forces killed four separatist guerrillas in a gunbattle near Chamheras village of Poonch district, about 480 km southwest of Srinagar.

Three soldiers were also injured in the encounter, police said.

Nearly a dozen militant groups are fighting New Delhi's rule in Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state.

India, which controls two-thirds of the Himalayan region of Kashmir, accuses Pakistan of arming and training Kashmiri guerrillas.

Pakistan, which rules the remaining one third, says it only provides political and diplomatic support.

Police and hospitals say more than 25,000 people have been killed in the eight-year-old rebellion in the Himalayan region.

Search abandoned for 30 missing after Chinese ship capsizes

HONG KONG (AFP) — Rescuers Sunday called off their search for some 30 Chinese seaman missing after their ship, the Fei Cui Hai, sank in the South China Sea.

The ship went down Saturday after sending a distress signal while sailing from India to the southern Chinese city of Nanjing, government radio here reported.

Insurers Lloyds of London said the search operation was called off Sunday morning, after only four of the 34-member crew had been picked up.

According to one survivor, only five crew members had been able to abandon ship with their lifejackets before the 32,000 tonne vessel sank.

Lloyds quoted the captain of one of two ships that initially responded to the distress signal as saying there was no longer any hope of finding more survivors.

The rescue operation was being coordinated by the Singapore Maritime Coordination Centre as the ship went down within its search area, a Hong Kong government spokesman said.

Elita Georgiadis says she wants to divorce husband, marry de Klerk

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Elita Georgiadis, the long-time lover of Frederik de Klerk, has asked her Greek shipping tycoon husband for a divorce so she can marry the former South African president, according to reports Sunday.

Rapport newspaper said Tony Georgiadis was trying to win back his wife's affections but has admitted he will not be able to stop her if she is determined to leave him and their three children.

Mr. de Klerk, 61, owned up to a long-standing affair last month with 45-year-old Mrs. Georgiadis and spoke of how they both tried to fight against their feelings.

Mr. de Klerk's wife Marike has said there has been no talk of divorce but radio reports said this week she and Mr. de Klerk had separated.

Mr. de Klerk has refused any further comment.

Rapport said Mrs. Georgiadis told a friend she wants as a divorce settlement the family wine farm in Paarl, near Cape Town, their luxury apartment in London and more than one million rand ($200,000) a year.

She believes, however, the London apartment will be too small when she and Mr. de Klerk share it after they are married.

The former president, who in 1993 jointly shared the Nobel Peace prize with President Nelson Mandela for his efforts in dismantling apartheid, receives numerous invitations internationally as a speaker and, according to Rapport, is considering a number of options that will see him permanently abroad.

One of these, the newspaper said, is as professor — Mr. de Klerk is a highly-trained lawyer — at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, U.S., though the university has denied this.

Mrs. Georgiadis, the report added, has told friends she "feels like Princess Diana" because of the all the publicity she has attracted since her affair with Mr. de Klerk was brought into the open.

She adds that Mr. de Klerk is a "king" who shall reach even further heights once he is married to her.

She also claimed she can manipulate South African newspapers "with her little finger."

An armed guard stands at the entrance of the capital's Congress Party headwquarters. Manist guerillas have warned Sonia Gandhi against campaigning for Congress in the snuthern state of Tamil Nadu, where her husband was killed in 1991 (AFP photn)

Tigers blunt Sri Lanka's bloodiest battle, toll claims hit 750

COLOMBO (AFPt — Sri Lanka's biggest and bloodiest military drive against Tamil Tiger rebels has been stalled by fierce counter attacks that left more than 750 combatants dead, according to claims by both sides.

Troops had been poised to mount a fresh advance from the northern town of Kilinochchi to capture a key highway after Wednesday's independence golden jubilee celebrations, military sources said.

The army had been aiming to push into territory held by the LTTE and open the 76-kilometres stretch of highway which they have been bauling to capture since May 13.

But fierce fighting erupted a week ago near Kilinochchi and the nearby Elephant Pass military bases, claiming some of the heaviest tolls in the nine-month campaign dubbed "Sure Victory."

"The latest attacks by the LTTE no doubt will delay the operation to take the road," a defence source here said.

"Tigers knew the army would start pushing again after the golden jubilee and that is why they launched the attacks."

Two army divisions, or 20,000 soldiers, are fighting to open the land route to the northern peninsula of Jaffna which can currently only be supplied via expensive and dangerous air and sea transport.

The army has already lost more than 1,100 men and many more have been wounded since the operation was launched in May.

Control of the highway is also vital for the army to corner the Tigers who were driven out of Jaffna in December 1995. Half a million Tamil civilians returned to Jaffna, leaving rebel-held areas after the army took the peninsula.

The loss of the highway would push the rebels further into the northeastern jungles with fewer civilians under their control.

In the latest bout of fighting which erupted a week ago in Kilinochchi, the final bastion of the Tigers that was captured by troops in September 1996, and the Elephant Pass military base, the rebels claimed killing 300 government troops while the army said they killed over 450 Tigers.

The Tigers, in a statement sent here from their office in London, said they were in control of Kilinochchi, a claim denied by the Sri Lankan security forces.

However, military sources said the military has lost its bunkers along the first line of defence on the southern edge of the town.

The military had planned to move soldiers southwards from Kilinochchi and link up with their colleagues moving north from the original column that mounted the offensive from the town of Vavuniya, 250 kilometres north of here.

They must cover about 40 kilometres along the main A-9 highway although the military says army flanks have moved much closer while travelling cross country through thick jungle terrain on either side of the road.

Junior Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte had vowed the road would be opeo in time for the country's independence 50th anniversary which fell Wednesday.

He blamed the delay was on monsoon rains, which he said bogged down heavy armour.

'Balloon landing a triumph for Myanmar's generals'

BANGKOK (AFP) — Myanmar's much reviled military junta scored a rare public relations victory by allowing a European balloon to land after its bid to orbit the globe was thwarted by China's bureaucracy, analysts said.

The Breitling Orbiter 2 made a text-book landing north of Yangon (Rangoon) Saturday after generals gave an unusual green light for it to enter the country, isolated by the West over criticisms of its dismal human rights record.

Thousands of excited local villagers rushed by foot and bicycle to the site about 160 kilometres north of Yangon as the balloon finished a 10-day journey that smashed the non-stop flight record.

The government, air force, and army cut through red tape, rushed technical arrangements for the complex operation and helped orchestrate the touch-down in the dusty hamlet of Okethwin, observers said.

Yangon also took the highly unusual step of granting instant visas to scores of television and print journalists to cover the arrival of the celebrated craft, a marked contrast to its usual reluctance to admit foreign reporters.

"They really pushed out the boat after seizing on the unexpected occasion to show they were ready to help and to cooperate with the balloonists after they had to change course and end their voyage," a local analyst said.

"It demonstrated a rarely-seen awareness of the power of the foreign media and its views towards Burma by subtly using China's initial refusal to welcome the balloon to show up its own willingness to help," a Western observer said.

Beijing had initially denied the balloon overflight rights and reversed the decision only after the Orbiter had missed a crucial fast jetstream that would have powered it over East Asia.

The crew and organisers decided to abandon the round-the-world bid Wednesday, but were intent on keeping the craft up long enough to shatter the 12-year-old endurance record.

Myanmar (Burma) granted gave the go ahead for the balloon to overfly or land there immediately after the Swiss organisers of the aoempt to circle the earth requested it Thursday.

Orbiter Flight Director Alan Noble said visas for the five-man team that flew in Friday from Geneva to help recover the 65-metre balloon were granted in a record four hours, as were the visas for a battalion of Swiss reporters travelling with the team.

"I don't know how often that happens, but it was pretty impressive," he told AFP. "The Myanmar authorities have given us all the assistance that we need, they have been really amazing," he said.

Mr. Noble and his team were rushed to the landing site by air force helicopter Saturday morning to meet the Orbiter when it came down gently more than seven hours earlier than expected.

Its descent was guided by Myanmar air traffic controllers, while scores of armed soldiers were deployed around the craft when it landed as locals thronged into the area.

A retinue of reporters dashed by road and air from Yangon to photograph and interview the crew as they emerged from after their 8,400 kilometre journey a quarter of the way around the world.

"The welcome of the Myanmar people and the help of the authorities with our landing has been excellent," pilot Bertrand Piccard told reporters when asked by a local reporter if the crew had noticed any signs of repression.

Television pictures of the arrival — and of junta soldiers shooting holes in the balloon's canopy with automatic rifles to deflate it after a technical failure — were flashed across the globe.

The event even got coverage in Myanmar's staid official media late Saturday and Sunday on one of the rare occasion where the state press and the international media corps worked on the same story. "It was all done very smoothly, despite plans being upset by the balloon's early arrival and although few journalists have been allowed to cover events here for the past year," one foreign reporter said.

But while the media offensive appeared to score points for the government, its battle to be seen as internationally palatable will be woo only once it has coovinced the West that it is making real efforts to stamp out political and ethnic repression, analysts said.

Hindu leader vows to block Sonia Gandhi as Indian PM

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A firebrand Hindu leader Sunday vowed to prevent Italian-born Sonia Gandhi from becoming the prime minister of India, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Bal Thackeray, chief of the Shiv Sena party, said: "This country is not so bereft of leadership and capable persons that it will allow a foreign lady to rule it."

Mr. Thackeray said he agreed with centrist politician George Fernandes that India needed a constitutional amendment to prevent a "foreigner" from becoming prime minister.

Mr. Thackeray said large numbers of voters were flocking to Sonia Gandhi's election meetings across the country because "she is a new model and people are just curious to see her."

PTI quoted him as saying in the western city of Nagpur that there "would be a strong reaction if Sonia Gandhi becomes prime minister."

The Shiv Sena, which rules the western state of Maharashtra including India's commercial hub Bombay, is allied with Hindu nationalists, who are expected to top upcoming national elections but fall short of an absolute majority.

Sonia Gandhi, who married Indian former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1968, has emerged as the star campaigner for her slain husband's Congress party.

She became an Indian citizen in 1986 and speaks Hindi, the country's main language.

Bangladesh opposition continues boycott, parliament session resumes

DHAKA (AFP) — The Bangladeshi opposition continued its boycott of parliament as the new year session resumed Sunday with the government reiterating it was ready for talks to end the impasse.

Parliament reconvened after a 16-day holiday amid signs the government was ready to offer some concessions to opposition demands.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its ally the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami were absent as the BNP pressed for the government to fulfil its three demands to end the boycott. The BNP wants alleged "political" criminal investigations against its members withdrawn, rallies to be allowed at two central Dhaka sites including the main Manik Mia Avenue, and the restoration of a hailey-bridge connecting BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's grave to a road over a lake.

Telecommunications Minister and government negotiator Muhammad Nasim told the mass circulation daily Ittefaq that if the BNP agreed to sit for talks "we can consider their demands over holding public rallies at the Manik Mia Avenue and political cases with police."

Mr. Nasim expressed government indignation over a BNP call for a general strike Tuesday in Chittagong to coincide with an historic weapons surrender ceremony, marking the end of a two-decade old tribal insurgency in south-eastern hills.

"We had progressed a lot in ending the stalemate, but the BNP's call for a general strike was unexpected," Mr. Nasim said.

"I appeal to them to call off the strike and sit for talks as I believe many among the opposition will agree there is no need for the action ... it is a strike against peace," he said.

The BNP over the weekend turned down fresh calls from the ruling Awami League for talks to end the parliamentary impasse.

It said talks could be held only after the Awami League met its three-point demands. It has also called for the peace treaty signed in December between the government and tribal insurgents in the southeastern hills to be scrapped.

The BNP has not attended parliamentary sessions since August as part of its anti-government campaign.

Scientist claims homosexuals' fingerprints more similar to women's

LONDON (AFP) — A British scientist studying the roots of male sexuality has discovered that homosexual men's fingerprints are more similar to women's than heterosexual men's, a report said Sunday.

In a two-year study, Professor Richard Green of London's Charing Cross Hospital and the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University found that although fingerprints are unique to each individual, said the Sunday Times, both men and women have more ridges on their right hand than on their left.

The study found, however, that the difference was less marked in women and about a third of gay men.

The paper said the study added weight to the theory that homosexual men have a genetic disposition to their sexuality, and might lead to fingerprint studies of dead celebrities to determine their sexuality.

Helicopter crash in Russian Far East kills one

MOSCOW (AFP) — A helicopter crash in the Russian Far East Sunday killed one passenger and injured another, Russian news agencies reported.

The Kamchatka Airlines Mi-8 helicopter was carrying three crew members, 11 passengers, and a tonne of cargo when it crashed while on a regular flight.

Interfax said the dead passenger was a 17-year-old girl who died from loss of blood, and the injured a seven-year-old boy who was hospitalised with severe head injuries.

The Soviet-era Mi-8 helicopter is in widespread use in Russia, notably in the armed forces, ministry of emergencies and civil aviation, but in the last year its reputation as a sturdy workhorse was marred by several fatal crashes.

In Sept. 10 people died in two crashes involving interior ministry Mi-8s in Siberia and the Urals.

In November an Mi-8 belonging to the emergencies ministry crashed off the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi, killing five.

After these and other air disasters last year Russian President Boris Yeltsin ordered aviation officials to tighten up air safety procedures.

Also, in January an Mi-8 carrying members of Mr. Yeltsin's family and top aides made an emergency landing after an alarm on board erroneously signalled a fire in one of its engines.

Carl Wilson, guitarist for surf rock band The Beach Boys, dies

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Carl Wilson, co-founder and lead guitarist of the California surf-rock band The Beach Boys, has died of complications from lung cancer, local radio reported late Saturday. He was 51.

Wilson died here late Friday with his family at his side, the station said.

The Beach Boys — Wilson, his brothers Dennis and Brian and their cousin Mike Love — had a string of 1960s hits about surf, sun, cars and girls including "I Get Around", "California Girls", and "Good Vibrations."

Critics often cite their "Pet Sounds" album as one of the all-time greatest rock and roll albums and former Beatle Paul McCartney has acknowledged it as an inspiration for the fab four's 1967 "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

Wilson was first diagnosed with cancer in 1997, local radio reported.

The Beach Boys were founded in 1961. Wilson broke with the band in 1981 to try a solo career, but soon returned.

The Beach Boys were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.

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Self-defeating arrogance

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benyamin Netanyahu is exploiting the situation in Iraq to target Iran as a potential threat to its own security. Speaking to foreign ambassadors posted in Israel Friday, he called on the international community to go beyond the concern over Iraq's alleged possession, manufacture or deployment of non-conventional weapons and target as well what he called Tehran's own mass-destruction weapons programme. "There has been very little attention at all given to threats of at least a similar magnitude, taking place in Iran, Netanyahu told the diplomats. "Iran is not subject to U.N. inspections, Iran is not subject to the threat of sanctions, and therefore programmes to develop ballistic missiles and non-conventional weapons can actually proceed unimpeded."

What can be more audacious and arrogant for a leader to lash out at other countries for possessing or attempting to possess mass-destruction weapons when his own state is accused of manufacturing illegally some 200 nuclear warheads, advanced biological and chemical arsenals with means of delivery capable of reaching targets thousands of miles away? The least Netanyahu could do in his talk to the ambassadors is offer some sort of compromise where Israel would get rid of its stockpiles of weapons in return for reciprocal steps by perceived enemy states. But for the Israeli prime minister to lecture the world on the evils of non-conventional weapons while proceeding full blast with developing his own is hypocritical at best.

Unless of course he thinks that Israel belongs to another category of privileged nations which are exempt from similar restrictions, it is on for him or anybody else to be that cynical. Israel would be deceiving itself if it continues to entertain the hypothesis that after building up its own mass-destruction weapons it can keep other countries in the area from acquiring similar capabilities, for they too feel threatened by the designs and expansionism of such politicians as the ones ruling the Jewish state today.

It is incumbent on all countries in the Middle East, including Israel, to work towards disarmament. Current efforts against Iraq and maybe Iran might force them to slow down the pace of acquiring weapons of all kinds but they are bound to fail in the long run, especially if the region does not find its way to peace and stability. The only way Israel can allay its fears from any and all threats is to respect international legality and implement U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning its conflict with the Arab World. Only by being law-abiding, less arrogant and more forthcoming in respecting its own commitments under the peace accords can Israel succeed in making this region of the world a zone free from all mass-destruction weapons.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Rai's Munes Razzaz Sunday expressed admiration of King Hassan II of Morocco for offering the leader of the opposition in the country the chance to form a new government. Abdul Rahman Al Yusufi is known as the leader of a parliamentary group opposing the traditional governments in Morocco, but King Hassan chose to appoint him prime minister in order to enhance the process of democracy in the country, said the writer. With this move King Hassan has set a good example for the rest of the Arab World and has set the stage for rotating the helm of government in Morocco, something previously unknown to the country, added the writer. He said Arab states which used to have a taste of democracy before the 1960s were plagued by the military coups which brought army officers to rule, resulting in the collapse of democracy and tragedies such as the 1967 war when the Arabs lost Palestine and the 1991 Gulf war which brought a bigger catastrophe to the Arab Nation.

Al Aswaq's Rashid Hassan expressed concern over the life of Jordanian pharmacists who are prone to attacks by drug addicts who, he said, would not stop at committing murders in order to obtain drugs. The writer said not only should the pharmacists be allowed to carry guns and be trained in their use but cameras should also be fixed at the entrance of every drug store to monitor those coming and going into the place. The writer said that since the assailants are after drugs the government can, as an alternative measure, arrange for medicines which could be used as narcotics to be removed from all drug stores and instead placed in a specific number of pharmacies connected to hospitals strictly guarded by security officers who can ensure protection to the pharmacists and the drugs alike. The writer said that above all the repeated attacks on pharmacies should serve as a sign to the concerned authorities that drug addiction is on the rise in Jordan requiring immediate action at the national level to deal with this serious development.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Aqaba, finally a freeport

MANY TIMES, the concept of a freeport/special economic zone is confused with free zones, even though the distinctions between the two are unique and should be made clear. A freeport/special economic zone has the following characteristics: occupies a large area of land that ranges between 20-5000 km2; has a diversified economic base wherein goods and services, including tourism and off-shore banking, flourish in such a diverse and free environment; all goods that are used in trade, industry and consumption are allowed into the freeport duty free; provides for uncomplicated business startups due to little or no red tape (something which has been sited frequently in the past as a cause of lack of foreign investment in Jordan); offers minimal regulatory and tax restraints; domestic sales are unrestricted within the freeport area and domestic sales are allowed outside the freeport upon payment of full duty. There are several examples around the world of freeports such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Bahamas, Subic, and Batam among others. (The Jebel Ali Free Zone is not a freeport area.)

On the other hand, an industrial free zone like the one in the north of Jordan usually encompasses a small area such as an industrial park with a focus on industrial exporting activities resulting in light industry and manufacturing development. Duty-free goods allowed are primarily capital equipment and production inputs. Profits tax abatement and regulatory relief such as exemptions from foreign exchange controls are awarded by the government, with domestic sales limited to a small portion of production.

Therefore, freeports are usually larger in area with duty and tax reductions and exemptions being a central feature. Industrial or commercial free zones tend to be small areas, about one km2 or less, and are usually fenced containing a singular commercial or industrial park.

Freeports encompass a wider array of activities while industrial free zones are concerned mainly with industrial activities.

Why does Jordan need a freeport? Jordan needs to attract foreign investment. In 1996, total new investment in Jordan was $470 million, with foreign direct investment (FDI) comprising only 20 per cent of the total. In fact, FDI per capita in 1996 was almost $14, a dwarfish number when compared to the $380 of FDI per capita in Israel for the same year (almost triple all FDI per capita in the MENA region which accounts for 1.9 per cent of the world's FDI). The ratio of investment that came from foreigners that year represented only 20 per cent of all new projects.

Last year, new investment increased slightly by 6.4 per cent from its 1996 level to reach $500 million. Foreign investment comprised only $82 million (16.4 per cent) of new investments with the majority of the funds coming from Arab sources. The limited resources for investment promotion — small market size, inadequate procedures and red tape, and, in particular, the lack of private sector participation in infrastructure provision — all combine to limit or retard the attraction of new investment to Jordan.

Again, why does Jordan need a freeport? To enhance Jordan's attractiveness of foreign direct investment, particularly value-added projects, stimulate growth in the export sector; generate high value manufacturing and service jobs; provide a sustainable basis for development; accelerate the role of the private sector in infrastructure development and provision; and halt the decline in the attraction of tourism to Aqaba and near areas such as Petra by phase out Aqaba's total dependence on shipping activities and having a larger role for tourism. Jordan can be a leader in the Middle East since the freeport concept is still untried in the Middle East.

The development of the Jordanian economy can be greatly enhanced through the establishment of a special economic zone. A freeport in Aqaba can easily and speedily attract foreign direct investments to create high-tech projects and high-wage jobs, thus spearheading the competitive thrust of the nation. The economic success of such a large and diverse area could spillover to other parts of the economy. (There is no reason for the whole of Jordan not to become a special economic zone.) And luckily, common sense does have its underpinnings in theoretical economics: Having an area or industry lead the growth of a nation is a necessary and sufficient condition for development, according to the works of many intellectual economic giants such as Joseph Schumpeter and W.W. Rostow.

Most significantly, one fears that, like in the case of privatisation, delay and inaction may render this vital and extremely beneficial step outdated and useless as other countries proceed faster than Jordan in the development of their own freeports. This fear is based on the clear observatinn of significant developments in many of the countries in the MENA region toward the creation of free industrial zones and special economic areas. There is the free zone of Abu Ali in Dubai; a $3 billion free zone which was recently announced by Abu Dhabi, Lebanon and Morocco recently issued tenders for the development and operation of private free zones; Egypt has proposed a freeport/special economic zone for the Suez canal region; Yemen has a large free zone under construction in the port of Aden; West Bank and Gaza has a minimum of 3 private industrial zones under construction; Kuwait has a private free zone planned at the port of Shuwaikh; and Israel has enacted a new Free Economic Private Zones Law.

If there is a message that must be passed on and remembered at all times is that whether one likes it or not Jordan has to compete regionally and globally. The development march will not wait for any one. A freeport today would help Jordan lead the region, a freeport tomorrow may be too late.

Human Rights File

Reciprocity — key to Iraqi conflict

By Waleed M. Sadi

IT APPEARS the Iraqi conflict is coming to a head sooner than later. Baghdad is facing a no-win situation. Iraq is damned if it yields to U.S.-U.K. pressure and opens up its country completely to UNSCOM weapons inspection teams and damned if it does not. This is a typical zero-sum game that must be haunting the regime of President Saddam Hussein. The U.S.-U.K. alliance against Iraq is also facing a similar dilemma. Attacking Iraq without full international and regional support risks making them them the villains and Iraq the victim. It is also not certain that even massive and devastating military strikes against Iraq would succeed in uprooting the ruling regime. The probability of causing high fatalities among Iraqi civilians in any precipitous attack on the Arab country would play into the hands of the Iraqi authorities.

Since there can be no absolute winner or loser in any military confrontation, the parties must redirect their attention in search for relative successes or failures. From Baghdad's own perspective, the lesser evil is to attempt to strike a deal that aims for specific objectives in return for destroying all weapons of mass destruction should they in fact exist. Iraq must accept that its situation differs little with those of Germany and Japan at the end of W.W.II. True Iraq, although defeated, is not an occupied country as were Japan and Germany. Yet for all intents and purposes, given the extent of control that it is being subjected by outside forces, it might as well regard itself as an occupied state unable to exercise its full sovereignty or control over its territory or airspace. The most pressing goals of Iraq should be its national security, well-being and territorial integrity and independence including of course ending of all sanctions and embargoes imposed on it. If President Saddam Hussein can emerge from his conflict with Washington and London assured of these objectives, no price is too high, including the opening of all sites in Iraq to international inspection — provided of course there is a time frame attached to such a deal. An economically strong and politically independent Iraq can do wonders for itself and its people. On balance, under this kind of arrangement, Iraq could emerge as the winner.

In this vein what comes to mind is the so-called reciprocity bases for ending a standoff between nations. The term "reciprocity" was recently coined by Israel as a line of defence against meeting its obligation under the Oslo accords. Since then President Bill Clinton seem to have endorsed this Israel criterion as offering the most appropriate quid pro quo modality for advancing the stalled peace process and ending the tug-of-war between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Given the ongoing standoff between Baghdad and the U.N. over providing the UNSCOM weapons inspection teams free access to all sites in Iraq including the so-called presidential palaces, it appears most appropriate to inject this reciprocity framework into the deadlock over the Iraqi case.

Assuming Iraq is assured in good faith of its most fundamental objectives as outlined earlier in return for the full and unimpeded inspection of all sites in Iraq, then the two ideas would have a balanced formula under which both Iraq and the U.N. stand to gain. The trouble with the thrust of the current U.S.-U.K. diplomacy and military preparedness against Iraq is the obvious fact that it lacks reciprocity in black and white terms. Instead of pushing the Iraqi authorities to comply with the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and provide the inspection teams full and free access to all sites in their country or else, Washington should be spearheading a more equitable crusade that promises Iraq its independence, territorial sovereignty and integrity and the lifting of all sanctions against it in return for this free access. Moreover, the time frame should be added to this reciprocity formula so that the inspection work would be concluded within a six-month period to avoid making it an open-ended exercise.

Implications of the shallow representations of culture in America

"I've seen the future, brother. It is murder" — Leonard Cohen

By Yousef Tuqan Tuqan

GROWING UP overseas and attending American Embassy schools, I have been exposed to American culture in a rather strange way. Through my American-style education and having snippets of American culture presented to me through my American friends and the occasional videotapes of football games and popular sit-coms, I grew up watching America from a distance. I must admit that although this gave me a rather partial and distorted view of what America was really like, it has enabled me to see to the heart of America. Through my basic American education and the freedom of not growing up a slave to television, I have been able to see America rather soberly, and I can fully appreciate just what it is that this country is all about.

The function of this essay is to examine what it means to be "American," and to consider what must be done in order to prepare this country for the future. America has little that even resembles culture. This is caused not only by its youth but by the fact that the culture presented to Americans today through the medium of television is cheap, simple and is created with the maximum effect over the shortest period of time in mind. This lends itself to little that can be consistent or can be branched from into a deeper and more defined culture.

America is in a state of ideological turmoil. Still recovering from the political tidal wave of civil rights legislation, the contradictions inherent in this "melting pot" society are still widely exposed, and America has been left scrambling to formulate a socioeconomic policy that will work and actually provide "justice for all" in being identified as an American.

Although America prides itself on the diversity and complexity of its multiethnic population, the truth is that a lot of what is wrong can be attributed to this very basic foundation of American society.

Although a multitude of ethnic origins can bring about a variety of cultures and viewpoints, what American society has done is to force all those willing to embrace it to surrender their own identity in favour of the homogenised end-product called America.

Although this may seem reasonable to the standard white citizen in the street, the ramifications of such an ideology are far less reasonable. Apart from Native Americans, there are no groups currently represented in the mainstream population that can truly consider themselves "American." While any white American will be quick to identify himself as a "red-blooded" true American, the reality of the matter is that he is probably the third-generation descendant of an Irish or Italian immigrant who came to America at the turn of the century in search of a prosperous life. While the enthusiasm immigrants showed in assimilating themselves with the American mainstream has endured and has made it relatively easy to become "American," this has not applied to everyone.

Even in this day and age, those who do not fit the standard American bill of being white and Christian have found it difficult to be accepted as Americans. Americans of African, Asian and Hispanic origin have been in America as long as anyone else, and yet the physical and social attributes that separated their ancestors from the white upper-class at the outset of America's history have still hindered their acceptance by the majority as being part of the same culture.

Although they have been as willing to accept American culture in favour over their own for the sake of becoming American, they have been met with derision as well as a general reluctance by the mainstream to accept them as representatives or participants in the creation and maintenance of American culture. While members of these ethnic groups attempt to hurl themselves into American culture, it is important to try and define what it means to be American.

Although the relative youth of America has enabled it to stay at the fringe of social thought and to be willing to advance and adapt to the times, the lack of actual history has made it difficult for any permanence to exist in American culture. The main reason for this is how transitory and watered-down the sources of American are. While other nations possess thousands of years of history as well as a sense of permanence for all that their respective identities seem to encompass, America has been left as a country whose morals seem to be questioned and rehashed every time the need arises.

Economically, capitalism has worked for America. The material wealth as well as the political and social reach of American influence lay testament to this fact. And yet, it is this obsession with money that America has inherited from all who came to the "land of opportunity" that is exactly what is wrong. The content of television, the most influential medium of our age, is not dictated by a responsibility to provide the masses with a good source of information, but by the wishes of advertisers who wish to find suitable vehicles by which to sell their products.

The Super Bowl, the most watched event in America, is the culmination of hundreds of football games and is preceded by weeks of hype and advertisements. While I consider sports to be a positive social outlet, the forces that move it, namely its advertisers and sponsors, have in my opinion, perverted the representation of sports in the U.S. Watching the Super Bowl, it almost seems as if the clash of beer bottles in the Bud Bowl and the latest potato chip commercials are as important to the viewers as the outcome of the actual contest.

There is no question that the content of television is mainstreamed, and so it must cater to the lowest common denominator. Television programmes are simplistic in their style and content and seem almost childish to one who can compare the redundant comedies that have enjoyed staggering popularity in America with the more intelligent and sophisticated comedy that is presented on British television. Although America arguably holds the largest group of artists and intellectuals in the world today, too many have been forced to compromise the artistic merit of their work in order to make it more accessible to the masses. Rarely has a talented musical group in the nineties put out a second album that wasn't undermined by the catchy and marketable sound of their music in order to give it more "air-play" on television and radio, which in turn would give them greater success. While certain mainstream artists have embraced this ideal as their style, good music has been unable to flourish or prosper because of its lack of representation on the radio, on the television, or in general society. Television dictates the choices of consumers, and only the most widely appealing products in the marketplace receive representation, generally owing to the amount of money its producers invest into convincing the consumer to choose it through advertisement and product placement.

However, probably the most striking aspect of this system of media domination is that those who exist under it are unaware of its influence on every choice they make in their life. From a person's choice of consumer products to his basic ideology and morals, nothing is beyond the reach of television and its architects. It is a sad sign of the times when an entire nation can be moved by the whims of a few businessmen, but this is where America stands.

Our parents feel the growing disillusionment I feel with my generation, and there is little we can do about it. The simplicity of television and the mental conditioning it has given the American youths of my generation has rendered them incapable of appreciating quality art of any sort. With the exception of some, people cannot appreciate anything unless they are told to, and that is very sad, indeed.

Another saddening casualty of our generation is our general apathy towards the world around us. Most children my age are virtually unaware of the geography of the world outside the United States, and seem to take a sort of childish pride in their ignorance. To them, whatever doesn't concern America doesn't even matter.

However, on another level, the explosion of information available to the man on the street has done little to slow the loss of concern with the administration of the American government. While politicians sit around and bicker about marginal issues, the youth of America have been pushed to the backburner of most political debates. Our futures are being pawned by people who will be dead by the time we have children, and most of my peers are virtually unaware of this fact, and those who are seem unwilling to even vote and make a difference. The saddest part is not that the children of today are so unaware of what lies beyond the plastic world of television, but that we will inherit this country in ten years and not know what to do with it. When my generation's children turn to us for knowledge or guidance, we will be unable to do anything but sigh and try to pass on our feelings of apathy and ignorance that will be the death of us. By then, the media will have enveloped us entirely and few will be able to think clearly enough to see past their influence.

Looking forward to the future, I predict a country of drones that are still slaves to the system, although the World Wide Web will be the new medium of choice. Its technology and structure as an interactive medium are far superior to television, and the virtually unlimited amounts of information that are currently available will render television obsolete by the end of my generation, but those who control television and in turn control America's minds are aware of this, and they are poised to dominate the next medium of culture.

America is motivated by money, and money is what has enabled it to advance and force the world to adapt to it at such an alarming rate. It has given a young country wealth and prosperity unimaginable to most, and it has all been accomplished through capitalism and the desire for greater material wealth. This vision has been distorted through television, and those who control television have conveniently manipulated it in order to suit their own ends. We are slaves to that which made this country great, and that is a sad thing.

The writer is working towards a degree in mass-communication at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Regent, Kerr discuss Iraq crisis, deadlock in PNA-Israel talks

(Continued from page 1)

negotiators to help break the current deadlock.

"We have a real desire to give momentum to the peace process and Britain, which is the current president of the European Union, wishes to put forth European countries' proposals in this regard, as we believe that the U.S. administration is capable of making the concerned parties resume the negotiations," he said.

"I have briefed the Jordanian government on the British stand towards Iraq following the British prime minister's visit to Washington, and we hope that diplomacy will succeed in solving the crisis," said the official.

In reply to a question concerning the French initiative and whether there was still hope for a diplomatic solution, Mr. Kerr said: "Yes, there is, and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook is in direct contact with his French counterpart and the Russian foreign minister. We expect to see proposals that respond to U.N. Security Council resolutions."

Mr. Kerr said that the U.K. appreciates the Russian initiative.

"We hope the Russian initiative will be crowned with success because we are concerned with ensuring the implementation of the Council's resolutions and the destruction of Iraq's biological and chemical weapons, because this is of paramount importance to us."

At the same time, the British official said London has submitted its own plan to the Security Council and has briefed the Arab League's secretary-general on it.

He stressed that Britain hopes that military force will not be used unless it has become clear that there is no possibility for a diplomatic solution.

Democrats rally behind Clinton in new battle with investigator

(Continued from page 12)

accused Mr. Starr's office of "unethical, unlawful and abusive acts."

Mr. Ginsburg charged in a telephone interview with The Washington Post that Mr. Starr was waging "an orchestrated campaign to get my client to do more than she can or will do."

Mr. Ginsburg's comments came after the White House counter-attacked Friday against a flood of news leaks about Mr. Starr's investigation.

Mr. Clinton's personal lawyer David Kendall went before television cameras to deny reports the president may have tried to coach his personal secretary, Betty Currie, before she testified before a grand jury on Mr. Clinton's relationship with Ms. Lewinsky.

Mr. Kendall blamed Mr. Starr for that and other news reports that were damaging to the president, saying Mr. Starr was responsible for a "deluge of illegal leaks."

Mr. Kendall released 15 pages of news reports he said were based on information from Mr. Starr's investigators. He said they were released in violation of federal rules designed to keep grand jury proceedings secret.

But Mr. Starr said that "individuals outside my office," including "the president's defence attorneys," were privy to information in recent leaks to the media.

Mr. Starr said he had no evidence that the leaks did in fact come from his office but would hold an internal investigation in an effort to determine if they did.

Mr. Ginsburg replied Saturday that Mr. Starr was "making reckless and inane accusations against others as the source of the leaks and [waging a] campaign of disinformation and clearly attempting to evade and avoid the responsibility for his office's unethical, unlawful and abusive acts."

John Conyers, the senior Democrat on the U.S. House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee, has asked U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to launch a formal investigation to determine whether Mr. Starr should be removed from his post or disciplined.

The grounds for this, he said, would be "repeated instances of alleged misconduct and abuses of power." Mr. Conyers said he believed Mr. Starr was partisan and had repeatedly "exceeded his responsibility."

Robert Torricelli, a member of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, said he wants Ms. Reno to appear before his panel to discuss Mr. Starr's conduct.

Fully 54 per cent of adults polled by Newsweek said it was "a bad thing" that Mr. Starr had expanded his investigation of the president to include the Lewinsky matter.

The U.S. News poll found 59 per cent believed Mr. Starr's investigation was "no longer focused."

Mr. Clinton has denied having a sexual relationship with Ms. Lewinsky but refused to say exactly what their relationship was or explain why, for instance, she visited the White House repeatedly after being posted at the Pentagon.

Israelis, Palestinians head to U.S. for more talks on pullbacks

(Continued from page 1)

on breaking an 11-month deadlock in the peace process.

Ms. Albright failed to move either leader towards agreement to a U.S. package proposal centred on Israel carrying out a phased pullback from West Bank areas in tandem with Palestinian compliance with commitments to fight terrorism.

Mr. Netanyahu rejects the U.S. plan in that it would require Israel to withdraw fully from an additional 12 per cent of the West Bank at this time and recommit to a further pullback scheduled for mid-year.

He said his right-wing coalition would not approve more than a one-time withdrawal, reportedly from no more than 9.5 per cent of the West Bank.

Mr. Arafat rebuffed the U.S. pullback offer as insufficient and insisted Israel carry out the withdrawal — already months behind scheduled — immediately.

David Bar-Illan, Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman, said the Israeli negotiators were heading to Washington "with no new instructions concerning the U.S. plan."

Nabil Abu Rudeina, a close aide to Mr. Arafat, also showed no new flexibility. "I doubt the talks will yield results unless Washington is ready to force Israel to honour its commitments," he told AFP.

The deadlock in talks has fuelled new fears of a possible eruption of violent street protests by the Palestinians.

Israeli newspapers have been full of reports about preparations for possible violence, with Sunday's Maariv quoting security officials saying they fear the Palestinians could profit from an eventual armed conflict in Iraq to launch violence in the occupied territories.

The newspaper quoted an unnamed "senior official" as warning that Israeli troops will respond firmly to any violence, raising the spectre of a renewal of armed clashes between soldiers and Palestinian police in September 1996 that left more than 80 people dead.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian newspaper Al Ayyam published a detailed account of the U.S. proposals over the weekend, citing an unnamed senior Palestinian official.

It said the proposal outlines a 16-week, step-by-step extension of Palestinian rule in about a quarter of the West Bank. About 13 per cent of the territory currently under exclusive Israeli control would come under Palestinian civilian administration, with Israel's army still in charge of security.

Another 12 per cent of the territory now under partial Palestinian control would come under the exclusive rule of the Palestinian National Authority.

In exchange, Mr. Arafat would agree to full cooperation with Israel in the fight against terrorism and issue a public decree outlawing incitement to violence against Israel by Palestinian officials or media, Al Ayyam said.

The Palestinians would also provide Israel with details of its police forces and of activists wanted by Israel.

Turkey accuses U.S. of wanting to create Kurdish state in Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Ecevit said the only reason a Kurdish state had not yet been established in northern Iraq was because the two main armed Iraqi Kurdish groups in the region had been engaged in fighting each other.

The two groups signed a truce last October, but clashes continue.

An estimated eight to 12 million Kurds live in Turkey, principally in the southeast. A further three million live in Iran, four million in northern Iraq under U.N. protection, and one million in Syria. There are also small Kurdish populations in the former Soviet Union.

Turkey's main separatist Kurdish group, the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), hopes eventually to make a Kurdistan state incorporating Kurds from Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq.

Turkey's Foreign Affairs Minister Ismail Cem voiced concern Iraq would be thrown into chaos by repeated U.S. strikes, the Sunday edition of the Turkish daily Cumhuriyet reported.

Mr. Cem's comments to the centre-left paper came shortly after his meeting with President Hussein in Baghdad, during which he urged respect of the U.N. Security Council resolutions on weapons inspections.

"What is the future for Iraq in the event of a post-war chaos caused by U.S. strikes?" questioned the foreign minister, doubting that there would be just one U.S. operation against Mr. Hussein.

Turkey is particularly concerned about the effect a divided Iraq would have on the stability in the region, Mr. Cem stated.

Jordanian popular support for Iraqis remains strong

(Continued from page 1)

smuggling car spare parts out of Baghdad, dealt a severe blow to President Hussein's popularity in Jordan, which has been eroding over the years.

Despite a string of goodwill gestures over the last two months, including Iraq's release of 92 Jordanian prisoners held in Iraq and Baghdad's agreement to renew a vital deal to supply Jordan with all its oil needs, his image remains battered.

"Many of our people got in touch with thousands of Iraqis who fled to Jordan over the past eight years from political uncertainty, oppression and economic hardships," said a university sociologist. "They heard of things they never imagined President Saddam would do and saw how once well-to-do Iraqis ended up doing menial jobs in Amman just to enjoy their freedom and feed families left back home," he added.

Iraqi-Jordanian ties, boosted by historic links, trade exchanges and inter-marriages, have withered political tension.

And a pro-Iraqi school of thought remains entrenched in Jordanian circles of power despite the gradual estrangement between the two countries' leadership.

Jordan's ties with Iraq hit their lows after Amman granted asylum to Iraqi defectors and began calling for change in Baghdad.

Though cool political ties with Iraq have prevented Jordan from taking the lead in Arab mediation efforts in the latest crisis, Amman remained a conduit for all world envoys who rushed to Baghdad to try and defuse the latest crisis.

"As a small country, we can advise but we cannot prevent a military strike against Iraq," Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani said in a recent newspaper interview. "We also cannot adopt the same stand as in 1991 because it will be a disaster for us."

His Majesty King Hussein, who was in London for the past two weeks, has contacted Arab and world leaders in search of a diplomatic solution. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, met with all envoys entering and leaving Baghdad.

Officials, haunted by memories of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, expect the U.S. to go ahead with a substantial military strike against Baghdad if it did not comply with U.N. demands. They are bracing themselves for all eventualities — from an influx of at least 500,000 Iraqi refugees to a rupture of cheap Iraqi energy supplies.

What will be most painfully felt is the blow to the economy if an outbreak of war puts at jeopardy the country's cheap Iraqi oil and wide-ranging trade ties worth together $750 million in 1997.

They are trying hard to calm Jordanian fears that a massive firepower against Iraq would deal a blow to stalled Middle East peace efforts.

Despite criticism from the opposition, the government has assured Jordanians it will not allow any party to use Jordan's airspace nor its territories to attack Iraq.

"No matter what we do, the opposition will always try to outbid us and claim they are more of nationalists," said one senior cabinet minister. "But we are basing our policies on facts and figures while they are building reactions on emotions."

Suspended weeklies allowed to go to press again

(Continued from page 1)

Meanwhile, the revocation of the press law, triggered a debate on the constitutionality of other temporary laws currently in force, including the elections law.

"The court ruling also raises questions about the validity of the temporary elections law, which was passed in similar circumstances," said Musa Keilani, publisher of Al Urdun.

The current elections law was introduced by temporary legislation in 1993, a few days ahead of that year's elections.

Opposition parties protested that the one-person, one-vote system introduced with the law was aimed at encouraging tribalism at the expense of their representation in Parliament.

The 12th and the current 13th Parliament were elected under the law.

"[Saturday's ruling] sets a precedent to annul all other laws that the government introduced trespassing its capacity and without genuine emergency requirements," he added.

Dr. Keilani said he will file a second law suit against the government to claim financial and moral damages.

"But we are also waiting for somebody to ask for compensation for the damages to the image of Jordan, distorted in the last four months after many efforts had been exerted to make it a paradigm for other Arab countries regarding human rights, multi-party system, and freedom of expression," he said.

"And no money can compensate for that damage."

The government amendments to the press tightened already existing restrictions, adding to the list of topics forbidden to be reported, and imposing tough penal and administrative sanctions for violations of the law.

Eleven political parties, the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, the Union of the Professional Associations, as well as independent personalities boycotted last year's general elections in protest against the amendments.

International press freedom groups criticised the amendments as lowering the ceiling of democracy and putting freedom of expression under siege.

The government has reiterated that, despite the High Court's surprise rulings, ways must be found to protect the national interest and security from what it described as "irresponsible journalism," which might endanger ties with "friendly" Arab and Western states.

Russia proposes partial closure of investigation

(Continued from page 1)

will thus encourage constructive relations on the part of Iraq towards the work of the special United Nations commission," said Mr. Primakov.

He said that of the four specific dossiers being investigated by the Special Commission, it was possible "to close at least the nuclear file."

Russian President Boris Yeltsin is "very anxious for Kofi Annan to go to Iraq, but the decision is his [Annan's] to make," said Mr. Primakov.

Western envoys in Baghdad told Reuters that Russia aimed to balance these apparent concessions with guarantees that within that time-frame the inspectors would have unrestricted access to the eight "presidential sites" at the centre of the dispute.

But they said it was unclear the Russian-backed proposals would win the approval of the U.N. Security Council.

"There is very large progress on these questions. Certain procedures have been established with the Russians and they will take them to the [U.N. secretary-general and the] Security Council," one diplomat said. "There are some good proposals on the table which need only formal approval."

The diplomat said Russia would propose some kind of time limit on the inspections. "It could be 30 days, it could be 60 days. I don't think Iraq wants to go to war on this issue for the sake of a week or two," he said.

"Will they [the proposals] be acceptable? I don't know. But they make sense if we all want a diplomatic solution and we look for the substance of the matter, which is verification," the diplomat said.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has declared its opposition to a military strike against Iraq, setting a diplomatic challenge for U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen ahead of a meeting with King Fahd.

Mr. Cohen, who was due to begin a three-day tour of six Gulf states later on Sunday, set out the case for a tough line against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein when he addressed a defence symposium in Munich.

He said Washington still hoped to avoid military action but insisted any diplomatic solution must contain an unconditional Iraqi agreement to give U.N. inspectors unrestricted access to sensitive sites.

"If Saddam Hussein has nothing to hide, he has nothing to fear," Mr. Cohen said.

"But Saddam Hussein and his government have lied consistently in the past. They said they had no chemical and no biological weapons — that proved to be a lie," he said.

Saudi newspapers reported that King Fahd's brother, Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan, said his country did not approve of an attack on Iraq.

"We'll not agree and we are against striking Iraq as a people and as a nation," the English-language daily Arab News quoted the prince as saying.

Iran also said on Sunday it would not tolerate any violation of its airspace or territorial waters as the United States continued a military build-up in the Gulf in preparation for possible strikes against Iraq.

"We will not tolerate any violation of Iranian airspace or territorial waters," Iranian Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani told a news conference in Tehran. "We will not allow any power to violate our territorial sovereignty in this regard," he said.

Iran has repeatedly called for intensified diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iraq crisis. It frequently voices opposition to the presence of U.S. and other foreign forces in the region.

The Arab League said a U.N. security draft resolution was being prepared to resolve the crisis but Kuwait, fearing Iraqi attacks, called up its reserve force of 24,000 troops.

Italy will not allow U.S. warplanes to use NATO air bases inside its territory to carry out military strikes against Iraq, an informed political source said Sunday.

The Italian government is opposed to any military action against Baghdad and has sided with Russia and France in urging a diplomatic solution to the Iraqi weapons crisis.

The chairman of the Italian parliamentary foreign affairs committee, Achille Occhetto, was quoted by the ANSA news service on Sunday as saying that the diplomatic initiatives taken by Moscow and Paris made any move towards military force "inexplicable."

Kuwaiti Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah issued the mobilisation order in view of "current circumstances," the official Kuwait news agency reported.

Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid said Sunday that a draft resolution would be submitted shortly to the U.N. Security Council seeking to avoid the "catastrophe" of a U.S. use of force against Iraq.

"A draft resolution is under editing and we are now studying a formula covering visits and inspections at some delicate sites," he told reporters here following a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Dr. Abdul Meguid refused to provide more details of the draft resolution, saying it is "still under study."

Britain, Washington's closest ally in the Iraqi crisis, said it was preparing to send attack planes to the Gulf in the next few days.

The United States and Britain have assembled a formidable military force in the region and have threatened to unleash it to try to persuade Baghdad to open up the disputed sites.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said London and Washington would strike sooner rather than later unless Mr. Hussein allowed the U.N. unfettered access to suspected weapons sites.

"Time is running out," Mr. Cook told BBC Television. "The deadline [for compliance with the United Nations] is getting closer and closer, and he will be making a big mistake if he thinks that we are going to back down. "If the air strike does take place, it will hit hard," Mr. Cook said.

In Jerusalem, Israeli security sources said Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai had held a secret meeting with Mr. Cohen in Munich on Sunday to assess the situation in the Gulf. The sources had no further details.

Mr. Cohen was due to arrive in Saudi Arabia's commercial capital Jeddah later on Sunday with the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni.

Their three-day tour of the oil-producing states has been billed as part of U.S. contingency planning for possible military action against Iraq.

Saudi Arabia was the springboard for the 1991 Gulf war led by U.S. forces to expel Iraqi occupation troops from Kuwait.

Recently sentiment in the region has swung against the United States.

In Baghdad, diplomats said Russian proposals to defuse the crisis would change the composition of the inspection teams and fix a time limit for their work.

The Western envoys said Russia aimed to balance these apparent concessions with guarantees that within that time-frame the inspectors would have unrestricted access to the eight sites at the centre of the dispute.

But they said it was unclear the Russian-backed proposals would win the approval of the U.N. Security Council.

European Commission President Jacques Santer said on Sunday that Iraq had to comply with U.N. resolutions on weapons inspections or else "take the consequences."

Speaking in Jerusalem on the second day of a Middle East tour, Mr. Santer told reporters: "The last [EU] council of ministers stated very clearly its position about Iraq. Iraq has to comply fully with the resolutions of the United Nations."

Tensions have escalated in the U.N.-Iraq stand-off over weapons inspections with the United States amassing hundreds of warplanes on the ground and aboard three aircraft carriers in the Gulf in case of possible military action.

"We are supporting all the efforts made by the secretary-general of the United Nations and also by our member states to come to a peaceful resolution. You are asking me if not, then I have only to urge Iraq to comply fully with the resolutions," Mr. Santer said.

"If not, then Iraq has to take the consequences and the responsibilities of those consequences," he added.

Several British Tornado ground attack planes have arrived in Kuwait and more are due on Sunday as part of a build-up for possible military strikes against Iraq, a Western defence source said.

"Some of the Tornados arrived last night and more are due later on Sunday," the source told Reuters.

The source, citing security reasons, refused to say how many of the eight Tornados Britain had said it was sending to Kuwait had arrived.

Britain and the United States have both warned Iraq that they will use military force if Baghdad fails to provide unrestricted access to arms inspectors charged with dismanding its weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Cook said the amount of time left for Baghdad would not be measured in months. "Let's keep him guessing. Our strategy throughout this has been to keep him on his toes, worrying about when we might do it and what we might do," he said.

Britain has already sent an aircraft carrier to the Gulf, joining three U.S. carriers in the strategic waterway.

Mr. Cohen on Saturday ordered 19 combat planes and 23 support aircraft to join the U.S. force gathered in case Washington decides to attack Iraq. Six F-117A Stealth bombers are to join another six Stealths deployed in Kuwait since November.

Defence sources said Kuwait would pay for almost all in-country costs of Western forces assembling in the Gulf Arab state just south of the Iraqi border.

Russian lawmakers' flight to Iraq left standing on runway

(Continued from page 1)

the delay and pressured government leaders to either demand clearance from Iran or find an alternative route.

The outspoken member of Russia's lower house of parliament told journalists that if the trip were cancelled he would forward a motion "calling for the immediate resignation of the Russian government" and another to sever diplomatic ties with Iran.

He also threatened that his party would block passage of the 1998 budget during its fourth reading in the State Duma next week.

Mr. Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party sent a plane-load of aid to Baghdad in December.

In a televised interview on Sunday, First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said he expected the plane would eventually be given permission to take off, but that this "was an extremely difficult and delicate" situation.

"Governments must carefully weigh each step connected with Iraq. Iran is no exception," Mr. Ivanov told ORT.

"I think the cargo should be delivered and the Russian Foreign Ministry will take all necessary steps to ensure that it is. As concerns the Russian delegation — the State Duma voted to send a parliamentary delegation, so we will provide all necessary assistance."

The Iraqi embassy in Moscow issued visas to 57 Duma deputies and 73 journalists to make the trip, ITAR-TASS said. An embassy spokesman said Baghdad would limit neither the amount of time the Russian delegation spent in Iraq nor its access to disputed "presidential sites," which U.N. arms inspectors suspect may hide weapons of mass destruction.

Economic sanctions in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) certifies the elimination of Iraq's chemical, nuclear and biological arms and long-range missiles.

Last week, the Duma adopted a non-binding resolution recommending that Russian President Boris Yeltsin review Russia's adherence to the present U.N. sanctions against the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in the event of a unilateral American attack on Iraq.

The U.S. has warned of a possible military strike against Iraq if Baghdad refuses to grant full access to U.N. weapons experts in charge of disarming the country.

During the cold war, Iraq was one of Moscow's closest allies in the region, and received considerable arms supplies from the former Soviet Union.

Russian oil firms have signed lucrative deals to develop Iraq's oil industry, but they are frozen pending the lifting of the U.N. embargo imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Russia is pushing for a diplomatic solution to the crisis and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov warned that a strike against Iraq would be a "grave mistake."

President Yeltsin has been sharply critical of U.S. policy over Iraq, Mr. Yeltsin's special envoy, Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk, is currently in Baghdad attempting to negotiate a settlement to the standoff.

IMF mission arrives Wednesday to conduct final review of Jordan economic performance

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission is expected to arrive here on Wednesday to review Jordan's economic performance before wrapping up a ten-year structural adjustment programme, an official said Sunday.

Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Ammari said the economy had dramatically improved after a 1988 crisis prompted Amman to begin reforms agreed with the IMF and the World Bank.

"By the end of this year, the IMF will no longer play a role in assisting the country to carry out further reforms," he told the Jordan Times.

But Jordan will continue to implement further reforms within the framework of a 1998-2002 socio-economic development plan.

"The economic reforms will not stop. On the contrary, they will be accelerated (with the launching of the economic and social development plan)," said Dr. Ammari.

Jordan is expected to launch the plan by mid 1998. It will focus on Jordan's efforts to move towards economic liberalisation and globalisation under a partnership agreement signed with the European Union in November with the aim of creating a free trade area by the year 2010.

Jordan hopes to join the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO) later this year.

The 1998-2002 plan, part of a series of socio-economic development schemes launched after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, will also tackle Arab and regional cooperation, as well as stability and sustainability of Jordan's economic environment.

It will also focus on boosting the role of the private sector and on setting a framework for a public sector regulatory role.

During its two-week visit, the mission will hold meetings with Finance Minister Suleiman Hafez and Central Bank of Jordan Governor Ziad Fariz to assess Jordan's economic progress throughout the past year, said Dr. Ammari.

In 1997, Jordan achieved a growth rate of 5.2 per cent — well below the aspired growth of six per cent, said Dr. Ammari.

But Jordan has achieved both monetary and financial stability. It also succeeded in boosting the dinar's exchange rate and reducing the current public debt through increasing national exports and rescheduling foreign debts.

According to Dr. Ammari, Jordan has also eliminated the deficit in the balance of payment current account which stands at 3.5 per cent, and reduced the imbalance between production and consumption from 128 per cent since the beginning of the reforms to 86 per cent until the end of 1997.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Amman Chamber of Industry is in the process of expanding its services to further support international cooperation and adapt to current local and global trends by establishing an industrial department and a small and medium sized enterprise department.
To achieve this expansion, a number of qualified personnel are needed with the following requirements and qualifications:

Senior Industrial Engineer (Post 1)
Minimum of 5 years experience in international industrial affairs.
Relevant masters degree would be an asset.

Senior Economic Expert (Post 2)
Minimum of 5 years experience in industrial management and administration.
Expertise in business administration and market.
Relevant masters degree would be an asset.

Environmental Engineer (Post 3)
Minimum of 3 years experience in environmental affairs.
Knowledge of industrial and technological aspects of the environment.
Master degree in a relevant field would be an asset.

Junior Assistant in International Trade (Post 4)
BA degree in Economics, Business Administration or Law.
Knowledge of issues related to international law and trade agreements and regulations.

Computer Programmer and System Operator (Post 5)
BA in Computer Science.
Knowledge of UNIX and Oracle is an asset.

All candidates must have:
* An excellent command of Arabic and English.
* Very good communication skills.
* Advanced computer skills.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a recent photo, in an envelope clearly marked with the specific post to which they wish to apply to the following address:

Recruitment Committee
The Amman Chamber of Industry
P.O. Box 1800
Amman 11118
Jordan

Deadline for receipt of applications is February 28, 1998.

UAE expects over $12b in investment this year

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) expects more than $12 billion to be pumped into development in 1998, with nearly half coming from private investors, its planning minister has said.

Sheikh Humaid Ben Ahmed Al Mualla said investments were projected to reach 46.7 billion dirhams ($12.7 billion) of which around 22.5 billion dirhams ($6.1 billion) would come from the private sector.

"The private sector has become as important as the public sector in terms of its contribution to investment. Its share of the gross domestic product has also steadily grown, reaching 40 per cent last year," he told local newspapers.

"The government is seeking to create the right climate for the private sector to allow it to play its part in development."

But Mr. Mualla said private participation in the economy remained confined to real estate, light industries and other traditional investment fields. "We hope the private sector will diversify its contribution," he said.

World Bank chief says investors should view individual Asian countries

MANILA (AFP) — Investors should look at individual Asian countries instead of the region as a whole because of the varying degrees economies have been affected by the regional financial turmoil, the World Bank chief has said.

Bank President James Wolfensohn also said the social cost of the financial crisis, especially on unemployment and poverty, must be addressed.

"There is a regional issue impacting the exchange markets and stock markets throughout the region," he told a news conference.

"But having said that, I think that there are very great differences between the countries which I would guess over a short period of time might become apparent to the market," he said.

Mr. Wolfensohn said that as of now, the crisis-stricken countries have not been "sufficiently differentiated" by investors, who tend to view the entire region as engulfed by the financial bushfire.

The World Bank supremo visited Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia before coming to the Philippines to get a first-hand assessemnt of the turmoil's effects.

Mr. Wolfensohn said Thailand and South Korea "have a particular type of problem which is not only a downturn in their economic activity ... but a specific problem in terms of unhedged foreign borrowings principally from the banks."

However, he expressed confidence about the ability of the two countries to deal with the crisis under governments "that are now focusing on the problem."

"So I think I have to say on any measure that we have made significant advances in those two countries," he said.

"In the case of Indonesia, you have a different problem in that unhedged foreign borrowing emerged from the private sector without the intermediation of the banks," Mr. Wolfensohn said.

He expressed hope that the "emerging ' consultation between the private sector and the foreign creditor banks" in Indonesia would resolve the problem.

"I guess what we need to do is hope and expect that there will be an agreement between the borrowers and the lenders to try and space out the repayment and carry the private sector through," the World Bank president said

"That is now going on and I guess it's an open item until it is put together," he added.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) last year arranged more than $100 billion in rescue packages for Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea, which have seen their currencies emaciated by the crisis and financial systems tottering under the weight of bad debts.

Malaysia, he said, has been affected by the crisis but "they do have, I think, adequate reserves and also a very focused government to try and go through this period."

The Philippines has been the least affected, aside from wealthy Singapore, Mr. Wolfensohn said, but urged Filipino monetary officials to tighten supervision of the financial sector.

Mr. Wolfensohn also stressed the importance of containing the social fallout from the crisis, such as increasing unemployment, poverty, children forced out of school, and rising cost of medicine and food, among others.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Around the middle of the day, you'll come up with an absolutely brilliant plan. It could be so new it doesn't have a name yet. That's because you're inventing it as you go along. Necessity is the mother of invention, remember? Well, you guys needed to solve this problem, and you're coming up with a unique solution.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You haven't even thought about borrowing money, because you hate going into debt. You might want to reconsider. Someone in a position to make you a loan has been watching. He or she knows you're a good risk. The only question is how much do you want to borrow and how do you want to pay it back?

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A partner has a brilliant idea. This will help you achieve a goal you've been struggling with all week. You've been trying to get something to happen before the conditions were ready. Well, they're ready now. Go ahead and act early this afternoon, when the opportunity presents itself. Be watching for it.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You'll have a lot of unexpected things popping up. Some of them will be new orders, which is nice. Others will be breakdowns. You might get a little edgy later in the day, not knowing what to expect next. If you go to work prepared for this, you'll be ahead of the game.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) The problem you had yesterday is starting to look ridiculously simple. It might even look funny. That's because you finally got the joke. Whatever you couldn't see before has suddenly become visible. And that, of course, has made you a much wiser person.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are trying to make sure everything gets done properly. That's your default position. You're a natural quality-control inspector, because you keep track of the little odds and ends and make sure it's all done right. That's your assignment, and it's going to be a challenge. You'll do a great job. You always do.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Chances are good that you won't get a straight answer to question you ask this morning. This person doesn't want you to know everything quite yet. It'll be to your advantage to do some digging on your own. Continue to ask questions around the middle of the day and you'll make a surprising discovery.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a good day to buy things for the home. The problem is, you might be making a purchase because something just broke. That's likely to happen right around the middle of the day. Be careful then, if at all possible. If you have a dog in the house, that's the one to watch.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You've had a couple of tough days, but that should be pretty well over by now. You're feeling a lot calmer. You're also learning a lot more quickly. Go ahead and make decisions now. You can trust your judgement.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It looks like some new information will become available in the middle of the day. That will get you going. Something else might be required before you can have what you want. You want matters to be complete as the work week ends. To make that happen, you're going to have to scurry.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You like to see the humour in whatever is going on, but sometimes you forget. You tend to get serious because you care so much that things turn out a certain way. Well, maybe there's something to be said for enjoying life. Allow that possibility to enter into your consciousness today.

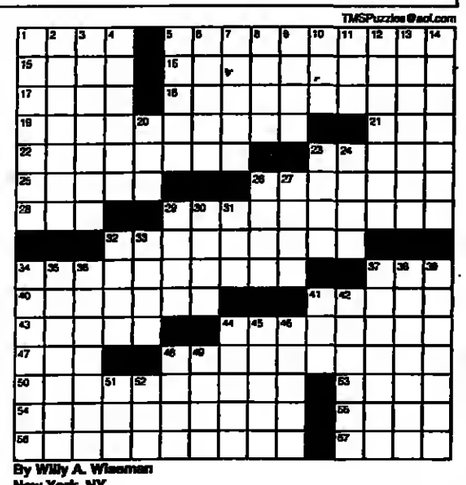
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You try to stay stable and calm, but it will definitely be a challenge today. Things are not only looking different than you expected, but they seem to be changing all the time. Well, not to worry. Everything is probably all going to land butter side up.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



ACROSS
1 Top of the mountain
5 Sugar in the ring
15 Area of a church
16 "A Man and a Woman" star
17 Ready for the picking
18 Potentially dangerous situations
19 Minute particles
21 Forty winks
22 Sea nymphs
23 Wheel spokes
25 Lethargic
26 Offense and defense numbers
28 According to
29 Iron-pumper's dream title
32 Tony Curtis film, "The Boston __."
34 Drop for cover
37 Winter mo.
40 Forays
41 Steak cut
43 Vituperate
44 Managers
47 As written
48 Dumbfounds
50 Selassie's kinsmen
53 __ Valley, CA
54 U.S. Open golf champion of '68 and '71
55 __-Lackawanna RR
56 Tariffless marketers
57 Brief time spans briefly

DOWN
1 White root food
2 Effeminate
3 One with high hopes
4 More acutely sensitive
5 Speedy
6 American chameleon
7 Disturbing cries
8 Chinese seaport
9 Just gets by
10 Thole insert
11 Beat follower?
12 Person with corrections
13 Gets back
14 Consider beneath contempt
20 Trade for tal
23 Dream of Delibes
24 Declare
26 Builder's abbr.
27 Limerick laugher quality
29 Horse of a 1960's sit-com
30 Absorbed-dose units
31 Verse opener?
32 Carrier plane feature: abbr.
33 Mumford or Busby
34 One's own man
35 Rabble-rousing troublemaker
36 Two-syllable foot in poems
37 Available
38 Natural to a place
39 Smith and others
41 Light starter?
42 Deep voices
44 Permanent
45 Heavy British weight
46 Belgian artist
48 Mimic
49 Hindu deity
51 Follower's suffix
52 Leftover scrap of food

By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY

■	P	H	S	■	V	O	L	G	A	■	■	P	H	T
R	O	U	E	■	I	R	A	N	I	■	P	H	O	E
P	E	A	R	■	R	E	S	U	R	P	H	A	C	E
I	S	C	A	R	I	O	T	■	P	H	I	N	K	■
■	■	■	■	E	L	S	■	P	H	E	A	T	■	■
T	H	I	E	V	E	■	P	H	A	N	T	A	S	Y
R	I	N	G	S	■	P	H	O	R	D	■	S	H	E
I	N	T	O	■	P	H	I	N	E	■	O	T	I	S
O	D	E	■	P	H	O	R	T	■	T	W	I	N	E
S	U	R	P	H	E	R	S	■	P	I	E	C	E	S
■	■	P	H	I	V	E	■	G	O	D	■	■	■	■
■	■	P	H	A	R	E	■	S	E	W	E	R	A	G	E
P	H	E	D	E	R	A	T	E	O	■	O	M	A	R
H	E	R	S	■	E	R	A	S	E	■	P	O	P	E
A	W	E	■	O	E	T	E	R	■	E	K	E	■	■

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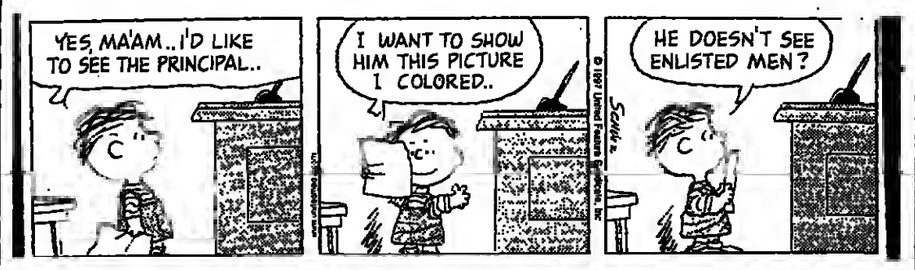
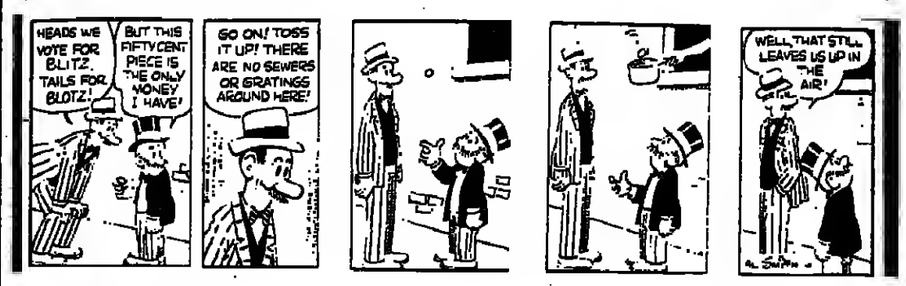
Peanuts



Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF®

By Glasbergen

"They found out what's wrong with my cell phone. It doesn't ring because nobody ever calls me."

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SAGYS

LAGOW

REFIHE

ENCLIP

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A ____ "____"

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: DOUBT FUZZY SUNDAE MALICE
Answer: How the tycoon kept the clan together — FAMILY "BONDS"

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordan Medical Association lowers charges for operations at private hospitals

** THE JORDAN Medical Association has decided to lower the charges for medical operations at private hospitals by between five and 50 per cent, Association President Basem Dajani said committee for medical charges has kept the check-up charges unchanged at between JD3 and JD5 for general practitioner and between JD7 and JD10 for a medical specialist.

Health Minister Ashraf Kurdi has annulled the list of charges, that was approved by the association at the end of last year, due to the high treatment charges and because it does not correspond to the living conditions of most people

Dr Kurdi has formed a consultative committee, headed by former minister Zuhair Malhas, and two former association presidents to examine medical charges. According to informed sources, the decision to lower the charges for medical operations is a positive step to bridge the gap between the association and the Ministry of Health (Al Ra'i).

Saudi Arabia agrees to supply oil to Jordan in case of disruptions to Iraqi supplies

** IT HAS been learnt from high-level Saudi sources that as a result of contacts between Jordanian and Saudi officials, Riyadh has agreed to supply Jordan with its oil needs at current international prices if Iraqi supplies are stopped as a result of a U.S. strike.

The Saudi authorities told the Jordanian government that it is ready to transport the necessary amounts of oil by vessels from Yanbu to Aqaba where it will be unloaded at special depots and then transported to the petroleum refinery at Zarqa. Jordan currently imports its oil needs of 11,000 tonnes from Iraq per day at reduced prices.

It has also been learnt that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has completed the preparation of a plan to rationalise the use of oil products in case of emergency. Such a rationalisation will include consumption at industries, homes and in transportation. In this regard, the government has increased its stocks of gas to meet demand for a very long time.

Minister of State for Information Affairs Sanaa Mutawi confirmed that Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh discussed the subject of oil with the Saudis during his recent visit to Riyadh. Dr. Mutawi said Saudi Arabia agreed to supply Jordan with oil supplies noting that the port of Aqaba is highly capable to store oil. However neither the amount nor the prices were discussed, Dr. Mutawi concluded (Al Dustour).

Jordan Trade Association preparing to hold first Jordanian industrial exhibition in Gaza

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Trade Association (JTA) said Sunday that it is making arrangements for organising the first Jordanian industrial exhibition in Gaza towards the end of April.

A JTA statement said that the exhibition is designed to help Jordan market its industrial products in Palestinian territories and to bolster Palestinian-Jordanian trade links.

It said that the decision to organise this exhibition followed the success of talks between Jordanian trade officials and the Palestine National Authority during a visit to Palestinian areas in November 1995.

The Palestine ministry of trade and economy has approved a request by the JTA to organise the exhibition according to the statement which noted that JTA officials have been in touch with the concerned Palestinian and Jordanian organisations to guarantee the success of the exhibition.

The statement said the JTA plans to launch an intensive media campaign in Palestine through the press, posters and other means and will conduct the necessary contacts with the chamber of commerce in Gaza and elsewhere in the course of preparing for the coming event.

According to the JTA, the current balance of trade between the Palestinian self rule areas and Jordan is in favour of the former noting that Jordan's exports to Palestine since the start of 1997 and until the end of November amounted to JD 10.7 million while imports from Palestine amounted to JD21.7 million in the same period.

It said that Jordan exports cement to Palestine and imports marble stone, soap, citrus fruit and cooking fat.

Meanwhile the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) announced Sunday that it will be taking part in a number of agricultural exhibitions this year.

These will be held in Baghdad, Duhai, Beirut Bulgaria, Franee, Bahrain and the Ukraine.

An AMO statement called on agricultural exporters interested in these exhibitions to make arrangements with its offices.

Also Sunday, AMO Director General Salem Lawzi announced that Lebanon has asked Jordan to export to its markets 20,000 tonnes of potatoes starting immediately.

Noting that it is the first time for Jordan to export potatoes to Lebanon, Dr. Lawzi said local firms and farmers wishing to export the commodity should coordinate with AMO.

Jordan normally exports different types of vegetables to Lebanon in the winter season and melons in the summer and, in exchange, it imports apples and cherries.

Dr. Lawzi made the announcement at a meeting with representatives of Jordanian agricultural firms and exporters with whom he reviewed the general export situation this year and the Arab and foreign markets buying Jordanian agricultural products.

He indicated that in December and January, Lebanon bought 20,000 tonnes of various vegetables but this is the first time it is asking for potatoes.

Dr. Lawzi also reviewed the different exhibitions in which Jordan will participate this year.

IFC extends loans to clothing, textile firms in Jordan

AMMAN (AP) — The International Finance Corporation (IFC) Thursday signed a $10 million agreement with a clothing and a tourism company Sunday to support the textile and tourism sector.

Since 1974, IFC has approved more than $243 million in financing 22 projects in Jordan. A member of the World Bank group, IFC has the largest multilateral source of equity and loan for private sector projects in the developing countries.

The agreement aims at expanding and diversifying the product line of El Zay Ready Wear Manufacturing Company. El Zay is a textile company that specialises in men's suits.

It has a sales agreement with Gruppo GFT Manufactures, one of Europe's top menswear companies with more than 30 operating subsidiaries in Europe, North America, the Middle and the Far East.

"We plan to specifically expand our shirt line and to work at a larger capacity," said El Zay manager, Costandi Yaghnam.

The IFC statement said that a $5 million loan will be granted to El Zay, repayable after nine years in addition to a two-year grace period. Interest rate is LIBOR plus 2.5 per cent.

BTC, a tourism development company, is constructing an international quality resort managed by the Marriott Corporation on the Dead Sea's eastern shore.

IFC's loan consists of $4 million and an equity subscription of $1 million. The project "will help diversify tourism activity in Jordan and in the Dead Sea area by generating over 500 jobs and foreign exchange," as pointed out by Andre Havaguimian, corporation director.

Auto industry overcapacity 40 per cent worldwide — Ford chief

PARIS (AFP) — The world auto industry's production capacity is some 40 per cent higher than demand, and the situation is particularly bad in Europe, the president of U.S. auto giant Ford has said.

"There is 40 per cent overcapacity in the world," Alex Trotman said in an interview published in the La Tribune economic daily.

"There is particularly overcapacity in Europe, which is why profit margin is getting smaller and smaller."

"There is overcapacity in North America, but it is not so great as that in Europe."

One of the few areas in the U.S. market without an overcapacity problem is light trucks, where the market is growing fast and could account for 50 per cent of total U.S. auto sales "perhaps as soon as 1998," Mr. Trotman said.

"Customers like the manageability of these vehicles, the high driver position, and the safety provided by four-wheel drive."

Ford trimmed $3 billion off its costs in 1997, "the chief reason for the increase in our 1997 profits," Mr. Trotman said, as prices are still falling.

"We will continue our efforts in 1998, but the cost reductions will not be so significant."

Mr. Trotman said the company "does not need to reduce the workforce much, and it will remain more or less stable."

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 8/02/98 18:33

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.8130	0.6085	1.4631	124.05	1.4351	1786.30	2.0428	6.0743
DE Mark	0.5516	-	0.3353	0.8070	68.41	0.7913	985.00	1.1268	3.3506
GB Sterling	1.6436	2.9740	-	2.3962	204.62	2.3586	2935.78	3.3573	9.9831
CH Franc	0.6835	123.83	0.4153	-	84.75	0.9802	1220.07	138.57	4.1488
JP Yen	0.0081	1.4609	0.4900	1.1790	-	1.1564	14.39	164.61	4.8947
CA Dollar	0.6968	1.2479	0.4186	1.0112	1.18	-	1231.91	1.4069	4.1831
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0148	0.3404	0.0819	1441.96	0.8033	-	11.43	3.3988
NL Guilder	0.4896	88.71	0.2976	71.61	60.67	0.7022	874.01	-	2.9721
FR Franc	0.1646	0.2983	0.1001	24.0748	20.40	0.2361	33.81	33.6100	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6405	0.3047	3.6726	1628.00	3.4026
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1347	0.4297	5.1800	2156.15	4.7990
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0812	0.98	407.42	0.9072
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9480	-	9.66	0.8081	9.74	4053.05	9.0252
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	-	0.0837	1.01	419.72	0.9346
Kuwait Dinar	3.2825	2.3273	12.3105	1.2376	11.96	-	12.06	5015.59	9.9346
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1931	1.0212	0.1027	0.9913	0.0830	-	416.05	0.9265
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4640	2.4545	0.2467	2.3825	0.1994	2.4036	-	2.2268
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2084	1.1022	0.1108	1.0699	0.0896	1.0794	449.08	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	15.16	14.93
W. Texas	16.69	16.60
Bonny	15.15	14.93
Dubai	12.73	12.63
UL Gas	160.00	159.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4836	0.16224	0.39038	33.0886
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4938	0.16568	0.39866	33.7806
KW Dinar	3.2825	5.95238	1.9972	4.80538	407.332
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.81	1.61394	3.8835	329.164
CY Pound	1.8763	3.4017	1.141	2.7462	232.766

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	288.25	288.75
Silver (oz's)	7.24	7.27
Platinum (oz's)	395.1	397.1
AL (3 Months)	1517	1521
CU (3 Months)	1700	1705
Zinc (3 Months)	1096	1100
Lead (3 Months)	535	540
NI (3 Months)	5580	5580

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period C'ncy	-1- Month	-3- Months	-6- Months	-9- Months	-1- Year
USD	5.50	5.60	5.60	5.60	5.53
GBP	7.38	7.37	7.37	7.26	7.37
JPY	0.41	1.12	0.48	0.50	0.50
DEM	3.39	3.44	3.38	3.44	3.83
FRF	3.74	3.47	3.66	3.84	3.72
CHF	0.93	1.01	1.11	1.23	1.53
ITL	6.12	6.02	6.69	6.39	6.13

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls
NewYork	DOW JONES	8189.49	72.24	0.89	8211.81	8113.02	8117.25
Newyork	S&P 500	1012.48	8.82	0.89	1013.07	1003.36	1003.64
London	FT-SE 100	5629.7	23.3	0.42	5629.7	5556.2	5606.4
Tokyo	NIKKIE 225	17040.06	36.76	0.22	17133.9	16980.9	17003.3
Paris	CAC 40	3218.66	27.06	0.86	3232.46	3173	3189.6
Frankfurt	DAX	4496.33	-52.13	-1.16	4530.61	4493.61	4548.46

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 08/02/1998

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
	346.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	9	320	105600	330.00	330.00	-
N	2.340	1.690	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	7	6400	11193	1.73	1.75	.02+
S	1.540	1.370	BANK OF JORDAN	4.6	0.00	5	20800	29928	1.37	1.44	.07+
E	2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.2	6.14	32	116800	199425	1.73	1.70	.03-
	5.300	4.610	THE HOUSING BK.	15.5	2.73	10	6504	33810	5.20	5.20	-
S	4.180	1.850	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	10.4	0.00	4	236	456	1.95	1.95	-
R	4.050	2.250	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	11.6	4.21	11	2695	6174	2.28	2.28	-
	1.530	1.050	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	2	8000	8400	1.05	1.05	-
*	1.620	.870	BEIT AL-MAL (BEITHA)	.5	17.65	2	750	638	.87	.85	.02-
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 233.07	CHG: -0.08		82	162505	395622			
	2.120	1.590	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	5.9	7.14	16	50100	105210	2.00	2.10	.10+
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 120.73	CHG: +0.49		16	50100	105210			
	2.050	1.550	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	9.6	5.05	17	16550	32849	1.99	1.99	.01-
I	3.620	2.450	HIMEH MINERALS	19.2	4.11	2	985	3743	3.62	3.80	.18+
	8.900	6.700	ALRA'I	15.2	5.88	1	5000	42500	8.40	8.50	.10+
	1.590	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	18.1	0.00	3	20042	23648	1.18	1.19	.01+
	4.000	2.890	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	10.2	0.00	1	500	1955	3.85	3.91	.06+
	1.090	.900	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	4	1500	1380	.92	.92	-
	2.160	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	7.9	6.59	5	1300	2166	1.67	1.67	-
*	.840	.630	UNION LAND DEV.	g	0.00	6	7061	4367	.63	.61	.02-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 116.65	CHG: -0.34		51	52969	112837			
	4.450	2.750	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.3	3.85	6	26449	75894	2.88	2.86	.02-
	4.140	3.050	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	9.8	2.84	2	2500	8840	3.65	3.52	.13-
	7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.1	3.30	1	6000	34800	5.76	5.80	.04+
	11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	9.9	8.67	11	2350	24516	10.28	10.25	.03-
+	2.890	1.330	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	g	0.00	1	150	198	1.35	1.32	.03-
	4.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	12.5	4.40	96	26690	122158	4.45	4.55	.10+
S	1.420	.800	RAFIA INDUSTRIES	g	0.00	1	100	80	.80	.80	-
	6.000	4.400	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	14.0	4.36	10	10620	60597	5.71	5.73	.02+
	.620	.430	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.1	0.50	4	1100	563	.44	.43	.01-
	1.120	.370	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	7	6750	2771	.42	.41	.01-
	.820	.530	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	g	0.00	1	500	265	.54	.53	.01-
S	3.000	.990	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	26.0	0.00	4	40000	43200	1.08	1.08	-
	1.610	1.150	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	15.4	5.79	3	1000	1210	1.21	1.21	-
S	1.800	.820	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	P	.26	19	10260	8429	.82	.82	-
	.980	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.3	0.00	5	7150	6374	.89	.89	-
	1.260	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	4	14000	16800	1.20	1.20	-
	1.200	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	45.5	0.00	1	800	800	1.00	1.00	-
	.810	.690	JORDAN STEEL	31.2	7.25	5	11450	7901	.69	.69	-
	.840	.570	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	9	9900	6041	.61	.61	-
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 110.16	CHG: -0.27		193	178028	421435			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 166.64	CHG: -0.02		342	443601	1035105			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 08/02/1998

N	1.050	.990	EXPORT & FIN.BNK.75%	E	0.00	3	850	829	.99	.99	-
	.610	.240	JOR.TRADE FAC.	9.6	0.05	9	19650	7074	.36	.36	-
	.800	.660	UNION INV. 50%	g	0.00	14	55250	11050	.70	.70	-
	.620	.360	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	1	50	27	.56	.53	.03-
N	1.000	.720	AL-SHARQ INV.CO.	P	0.00	1	1000	920	.92	.92	-
	.760	.610	AL-DAWLIYAH 75%	66.2	0.00	2	2050	902	.69	.69	-
	.500	.260	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	29.9	0.00	2	550	142	.27	.36	.01-
	.750	.380	NATL.MULT.ENG.MANUFCO	g	0.00	70	213159	81772	.39	.38	.01-
	.520	.400	ARAB ELECT.INDS.	g	3.00	2	333	147	.47	.46	.01-
	.670	.580	MIDEAST PHARM. 80%	E	0.50	1	100	51	.64	.61	.03-
	1.500	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	g	0.05	6	12300	14765	1.36	1.36	-
	.730	.550	RAZI PHARM.	E	0.00	3	10250	7075	.69	.70	.01+
	.470	.240	INDS. ENG.	g	0.00	1	200	54	.27	.27	-
*N	.950	.560	ADVANCED PHARMA.INO.	E	0.00	13	5579	3235	.56	.55	.01-
	.820	.490	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	4	5450	2889	.54	.53	.01-
*N	.950	.630	OPTICALS HEARING 75%	E	0.00	2	500	175	.63	.60	.03-
N	1.000	.660	NAT.ALUMINIUM. 75%	93.2	0.00	15	22100	9216	.66	.67	.01+
	1.100	.720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	51.1	0.00	3	540	570	1.05	1.06	.01+
N	1.310	1.000	NUTRIDAR	E	0.00	16	12277	13254	1.08	1.08	-
	GRAND TOTAL					171	363475	253942			

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Davenport upsets Hingis in Pan Pacific final

TOKYO (AFP) — Atlanta Olympic champion Lindsay Davenport smashed aside World No. 1 and defending champion Martina Hingis to win the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament on Sunday.

The American, one of the only five players in the world to have beaten Hingis last season, used power-packed strokes and effective approach shots to score a 6-3, 6-3 victory over the Swiss teenager.

"It was probably the best match I've played her in my life," Davenport said. "I knew how I had to play today and the style I had to play. There are not many days you feel great and today I felt like I played great."

Davenport attacked Hingis' second serve and fired a sizzling service return winner to capitalise on a triple break opportunity to take a 4-3 lead.

The American hit another service return hard and deep on her advantage point in the ninth game to win the first set.

Hingis had a 30-40 break chance in the first game of the second set, but Davenport stood firm on her serve after repeating deuces four times.

A disappointed Swiss double-faulted twice before losing the following game to go down 0-2 and, although she once broke back in the fifth game for 2-3, Hingis never recovered from the deficit.

"After I got up 3-love in the second set, I knew she was going to do something differently. She just started making her shots and the momentum started to turn a little bit," said Davenport, who lost eight points in a row in the fourth and fifth games.

"But I was able to break her again right back and I think that was a big game. Instead of getting back to 3-all, I was able to got up a break again," she added.

Hingis said: "She put so much pressure on me to hit always my first serve, otherwise, she was just killing me all the time ... that's why I double-faulted (in the second game of the second set)."

"I was just forced to risk so much. That's not really my game. She just didn't miss anything and she didn't let me get back into the match."

It was the first title of the season and 14th overall for the 21-year-old American World No. 2, who successfully collected six titles last year.

American Lindsay Davenport (L) beams for the cameras as she holds up her trophy with second placer Martina Hingis of Switzerland, upon defeating the Swiss World No. 1 in the Pan Pacific Open tennis championship at Tokyo Metropolitan Gym February 8. Davenport won 6-3 6-3 (Reuters photo)

Davenport received the winner's check of $150,000 and reduced her win-loss record against Hingis to four wins and five defeats.

For Hingis, who became the youngest player to defend a Grand Slam title at the Australian Open a week ago, it was the second time this season to fail defend a title following her Sydney disappointment.

But Hingis said she was not disappointed. "She was just a better player today. As long as I win the Grand Slams and lose other tournaments like this in the finals, it's not disappointing," she added.

Hingis planned to stay a few more days in Japan to shoot some commercials and then intends to go climbing in Nepal before returning to the court at Indian Wells in March.

Martina and Marjana win doubles

Martina Hingis and Marjana Lucic made it a second straight victory when they defeated the defending champions to win the doubles title at the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament.

The Swiss-Croat pair beat the World No. 1 doubles duo of American Lindsay Davenport and Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 7-5, 6-4.

It was sweet revenge for Hingis, who failed to defend her singles title to Davenport earlier in the day.

"There was a kind of luck that we played together," said Hingis, who paired with Lucic in Melbourne because her partner, Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic did not compete.

"We started off to the Grand Slam in Australia, that was a great start. We got a wild card there and we played the qualifying rounds, so it's kind of funny, but we made it to win again."

"We are not gonna be Woodies. We are gonna be M and M like me and Martina are M and M. It sounds better," said Lucic, 15, who a week ago became with Hingis the youngest ever pairing to win the Australian Open.

Australian world doubles number ones Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge are known as the "Woodies."

Hingis, however, said she has already made up to team with Novotna for the rest of the season, but she promised to pair with Lucic again at Indian Wells in March and several other events.

"We are both very young, we understand each other on the court much better. Before, I played with Helena Sukova and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and I felt they are the leaders," said Hingis.

"But now, it's different for me, different experience. As a team, we are also very good off the court, we also try to do things together, that's why it works so well so far," added Hingis.

Lucic is expected to appear in the doubles rankings for the first time Monday at above 30th position after her two victories in Melbourne and Tokyo, according to a WTA spokesman.

Ivanisevic beats Rusedski for 2nd straight year

SPLIT (AFP) — Goran Ivanisevic won a battle of big-serving left-handers Sunday as he defeated Greg Rusedski 7-6 (7-3), 7-6 (7-5) in the final of the Croatian Indoors ATP tournament.

Ivanisevic, 26, repeated his victory over Rusedski in last year's final as he took out the event for the third straight year. He now has a 15-0 record in the tournament, which was held in Zagreb the previous two years.

The No.2 seed, winning his 21st career title, downed top-seeded Canadian-born Briton Rusedski for the seventh time in their seven meetings.

Ivanisevic was cheered on by a passionate crowd. He was born in Split and still maintains a home here, as well as a residence in Monte Carlo.

Rusedski went through the tournament without dropping his serve, but could not match Ivanisevic in the two tiebreakers.

Ivanisevic, who played with a support bandage on his left knee, said afterwards that he had been under incredible pressure for the last seven days and felt physically battered.

"There is no single part of my body that doesn't hurt ... therefore I am glad to have won for the third time here in a very difficult match. I played well when it counted and I'm extremely happy," he said.

Rusedski said that Ivanisevic had been the better player on the day and he hoped to get another shot at the title. "You know what they say sometimes — third time lucky — so maybe next year," he said.

African Nations Cup

Ghana seek victory over Tunisia

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — Ghana and Tunisia meet at the August 4 Stadium here Monday in an African Nations Cup first-round match that should decide who wins Group B.

Their rivals, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and Togo, play earlier at the Municipal Stadium with the losers destined to finish bottom of the mini-league.

Although Ghana have gone 16 years without a title, the four-time champions seem set to do well in Burkina Faso because they are used to the harsh West African conditions.

Visitors to Ouagadougou have already experienced power cuts and water shortages and temperatures topping 40 degrees are not conducive to good football.

The Black Stars boast an impressive record against the North Africans, drawing the first meeting 35 years ago in Accra and winning four subsequent clashes.

Dutch coach Rinus Israel has dropped striker Tony Yeboah for indiscipline and many supporters believe this will boost morale as the German-based star often disagreed with captain Abedi 'Pele' Ayew.

At 33, midfielder Pele has hinted that he could be making his final appearance in a tournament where he collected a winner's medal 16 years ago in Libya.

The biggest concern of Tunisian coach Henri Kasperczak is that his side are rated among the cup favourites with Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Morocco, South Africa and Zambia.

Tunisia enjoyed similar status as 1994 hosts and were eliminated in the first round only to finish runners-up to South Africa two years later when written off.

The Congolese have played no warm-up matches and Togo probably wish they had followed suit after losing 7-2 in Egypt and 4-0 at home to non-qualifiers Mali.

Shaky Cameroon earn opening victory

Africa's World Cup representatives Cameroon had a shaky but successful opening match at the African Nations Cup, beating hosts Burkina Faso 1-0.

And Cameroon coach Jean Manga Onguene believed the high temperatures, sometimes as high as 40 degrees in the shade, were a factor in the match.

"Most of my players play in Europe where it's cold at the moment, and many of them really suffered in the heat," Onguene said.

Alphonse Tchami scored midway through the first half to give Cameroon a 1-0 victory.

Now the host country have a difficult task to qualify. To make the quarter-finals, they will almost certainly have to beat Algeria on Wednesday. Burkina coach Philippe Troussier, who takes over the coach's reins with South Africa on March 1, said they should have got a better result.

"We deserved at least a draw," said Troussier, "and we paid for our lack of experience, even a certain naivete." But Frenchman Troussier added on a more optimistic note. "All is not lost — we have two matches to get back the initiative."

United stumble, but rivals slump

LONDON (AFP) — Andy Cole struck a late equaliser to save Manchester United from a fourth league defeat in five games as the Premiership champions were held to a 1-1 draw by struggling Bolton on Saturday.

But United still managed to stretch their lead at the top to five points after title rivals Blackburn and Liverpool slumped to shock home defeats to Tottenham and Southampton respectively.

Chelsea, though, can reduce that lead to just two points if they beat London rivals Arsenal at Highbury on Sunday.

United manager Alex Ferguson felt Cole's 21st goal of the season was the least the champions deserved for their efforts after watching his side hit the woodwork four times.

Before the delayed kick-off, eight wreaths were laid in the centre circle and a minute's silence was observed on the 40th anniversary of the Munich air crash in which 23 people died, including eight United players.

Meanwhile, under-fire Tottenham boss Christian Gross breathed a huge sigh of relief after watching his struggling side romp to an astonishing 3-0 victory away to title challengers Blackburn.

Nicola Berti, Chris Armstrong and Ruel Fox grabbed the goals as Spurs bounced back from Wednesday's 3-1 FA Cup defeat at Barnsley with a victory which lifts them out of the relegation zone.

Liverpool chief Roy Evans was left groping for excuses after watching his side crash to a 3-2 defeat to fast-improving Southampton at Anfield.

Newcastle's dismal season continued when they were beaten 1-0 at home by high-flying West Ham, but manager Kenny Dalglish refused to blame defeat on his decision to play three new players while making five changes to the side which defeated Stevenage Borough in Wednesday's FA Cup fourth round replay.

In the bottom-of-the-table clash at Oakwell, Barnsley and Everton shared the points in a 2-2 draw.

Derby suffered their first home defeat of the campaign, 1-0 losers to Aston Villa, whose goal came from Dwight Yorke in the final minute.

In mid-table at Highfield Road, hosts Coventry were also 1-0 winners, thanks to a Dion Dublin penalty that sunk Sheffield Wednesday in the 74th minute.

SCOREBOARD

Italian Serie A

Bari	0	Fiorentina	1
Empoli	5	Napoli	0
Inter Milan	0	Bologna	1
Juventus	3	AS Roma	1
Lazio	2	AC Milan	1
Piacenza	1	Vicenza	1
Sampdoria	2	Brescia	1
Udinese	6	Lecce	0

English Premiership

Barnsley	2	Everton	2
Blackburn	0	Tottenham	3
Coventry	1	Sheff Wed	0
Derby	0	Aston Villa	1
Leicester	1	Leeds	0
Liverpool	2	Southampton	3
Man Utd	1	Bolton	1
Newcastle	0	West Ham	1

Bundesliga

B. Munich	2	Hansa Rostock	0
B. Dortmund	3	Stuttgart	1
B. Monchen.	0	Schalke 04	1
Hamburg	1	Hertha Berlin	1
A. Bielefeld	1	1860 Munich	1
B. Leverkusen	4	Werder Bremen	1
Kaiserslautern	3	VfL Bochum	0
Duisburg	1	Karlsruhe	0

French Cup

Mulhouse	2	Auxerre	1 aet
Wasquehal	1	Guingamp	2
Cannes	3	Beauvais	1 aet
Caen	1	Nantes	0
Lorient	0	Paris St. Germain	1
Epinal	0	Lens	2 aet
Angouleme	0	Lyon	2
Istres	1	Rennes	0
B.-sur-Mer	0	Marseille	1
Toulon	2	Nancy	0
Trelissac	1	Sochaux	2
Argentan	0	Sedan	0 aet

(Argentan qualify on penalties)

Pau	2	Ales	2 aet

(Pau qualify on penalties)

Spanish First Division

Real Sociedad	1	Athletic Bilbao	1
Majorca	2	Compestela	1

Belgian First Division

Beveren	1	FC Brugge	2
La Gantoise	3	Charleroi	1
Standard Liege	0	Ekeren	2
Lierse	1	Aalst	1
Molenbeek	1	Lommel	2
Antwerp	0	Saint-Trond	4

Dutch First Division

Breda	0	Heerenveen	2
Willem Tilburg	1	Vitesse Arnhem	0

NHL

Los Angeles	5	Anaheim	2
Carolina	3	Boston	1
Colorado	3	Philadelphia	2
Dallas	3	Chicago	1
New Jersey	3	NY Islanders	2
St. Louis	4	Detroit	1
Toronto	3	Florida	2
Tampa Bay	4	Washington	3
Buffalo	4	Montreal	1
Ottawa	2	Pittsburgh	2 (OT)
Phoenix	1	NY Rangers	1 (OT)
Calgary	4	Edmonton	2
Vancouver	6	San Jose	3

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠A 10 6 3 ♥Q 10 ♦9 5 4 ♣A 9 6 2

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	3♠	Dbl	Pass
?			

What action do you take?

Q. 2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠K 4 ♥9 ♦A K 4 ♣Q 6 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

What action do you take?

Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠A K 7 4 ♥A 8 4 ♦6 4 ♣A K J 8

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♥	Pass	?	

What do you respond?

Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠A 10 4 ♥A 10 8 3 ♦A Q 10 2 ♣9 2

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	4♠	?	

What do you bid now?

Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠Q 7 6 3 2 ♥A 9 8 6 4 3 ♦Void ♣K Q

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠A K 7 4 3 ♥4 ♦J 8 3 ♣A Q 9 5

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
?			

What do you bid now?

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Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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PLAZA
STARSHIP TROOPERS
Shows: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE
Shows: 12:00, 1:30, 5:00

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(ARABIC)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
MR. BEAN
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Enqvist retains title

MARSEILLE (AFP) — Sweden's Thomas Enqvist retained his ATP Tour title here on Sunday beating top seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia 6-4, 6-1 in the final. The 23-year-old Enqvist, seeded sixth, broke Kafelnikov, returning from a knee injury that forced him to pull out of the Australian Open, three times in the second set to claim his 12th title. It was Enqvist's first tournament success since winning here last year and he became the second player to win the event two years running — following in the footsteps of Marc Rosset of Switzerland in 1993 and 1994.

Nigeria may bid for Cup

ABUJA (AFP) — Nigerian minister of sports Emeka Onieruah said on Saturday that Nigeria might launch a bid to host the World Cup in 2006 or 2010. "As the most populous black country in the world, we think we are capable of hosting competitions at the highest level, hence the plan to use the 1999 youth championship as a stepping stone," Omeruah said. How well Nigeria organises the FIFA/Coca Cola World Youth Championship next year would determine the chances of Nigeria's bid.

Makinen takes charge

KARLSTAD (AFP) — Tommi Makinen, seeking to win his third successive world title this year, took the lead after the second stage of the Swedish Rally, the second race in the world championship, as overnight leader Thomas Radstrom crashed out. The Mitsubishi driving Makinen, who crashed out of the opening Monte Carlo rally while in the lead on the final day, leads compatriot and fourtime world champion Juha Kankkunen by 1' min 23 sec and Spain's former world champion Carlos Sainz.

Nagano sees records and gold medals as fog delays downhill

NAGANO (AP) — Speedskaters turned the Winter Games into a world record fest Sunday, clap skating their way to three 5,000-metre marks climaxed by Dutchman Gianni Romme's glide to the gold medal.

The snowboard giant slalom featured a dramatic triumph by Canadian Ross Rebagliati, who came from eighth position in the second run to win gold and give the sport a thrilling Olympic debut.

But there was disappointment, too, when fog and heavy snow forced postponement of Alpine skiing's premier event, the men's downhill. The racers will try again on Wednesday.

In pairs figure skating, Russians Artur Dmitriev and Oksana Kazakova took the lead after the short programme. They were one of only five couples among 20 to hit side-by-side triple jumps on a sloppy opening night.

Going into Tuesday night's free skate, world champions Mandy Woetzel and Ingo Steuer of Germany were second and favourites Yelena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze of Russia were third.

The speedskating record was improved no less than three times on the revolutionary blades with bronze medalist, Belgian Bart Veldkamp, and Dutchman Rintje Ritsma, who took the silver, setting new marks before Romme made his incredible run.

Romme, racing in the final pair, finished in 6 minutes 20.22 seconds, slashing more than six seconds from the Mark Ritsma set 20 minutes earlier. Romme reclaimed the mark he held coming into the Olympics.

"It was just too crazy. I could never have imagined in my life this would happen," said Romme afterwards.

"I saw what Ban and Rintje did and I wanted to protect my record," he said. Ritsma also knew what was happening well before the 12 1/2 laps ended. "After two or three laps I knew what was happening, so it was easy to watch," he said.

Orange-clad Dutch fans at the M-wave arena went into a frenzy at the cascade of records.

Romme also shaved almost 13 seconds off the 1994 Olympic mark of the great Johann Olav Koss, a world record at the time.

"But there is no way I can compare myself with Koss," he said, showing respect for the Norwegian, a triple gold-medalist four years ago. "The ice was so good here."

"Maybe we'll break it again, and not just me, all the guys up here," he said.

The Dutch 1-2 finish matched Russia's triumph in the women's 15-kilometre classical cross-country, with Olga Danilova earning the first gold at the Nagano Games.

With all the favourites faltering, Danilova, a 27-year-old sports instructor, had to chase down her better-known compatriot Larissa Lazutina before edging her time in the final kilometre, the bronze went to Norway's Anita Moen-Guidon.

"I need to spend some time alone to realise what I've done," said Danilova, who spent most of the past two seasons on Russia's second-string team.

An exuberant Rebagliati wanted to share his joy with the world.

"It's a dream come true. I've been thinking about this for the past few years, ever since we found I was going to come to the Olympics," said the 26-year-old from Whistler, British Columbia.

The Canadian steered his snowboard down a treacherous, foggy course, showing why the exciting new event deserved its place in the Olympics.

Rebagliati, who was eighth after the first run, carved a super second run to finish in 2 minutes, 3.96 seconds, edging Italy's Thomas Prugger by just .02 seconds. Ueli Kestenholz of Switzerland took the bronze, a mere .12 seconds out.

Austria's Alpine star Hermann Maier had hoped to realise his Olympic goal at the Happo'one downhill course, but conditions proved too dangerous to race.

The World Cup leader, Maier is favourite in the downhill, giant slalom and Super-G slalom races at Nagano.

"It was snowing unbelievably hard," said defending Olympic champion Tommy Moe of the United States. "Fog would come in and go out, then it would be clear for a second, then it would snow harder."

It was the third time in the last five Olympics the downhill did not start on time because of snow.

The weather forecast was for steady snow, with accumulations of 40 cm, through Monday night and gusty winds.

Sunday was also the start of the continuing luge battle between Georg Hackl of Germany and Marcus Prock of Austria.

Hackl, wearing aerodynamic, golden-coloured shoes, set a course record on the first of two runs, leaving Probst well back in third place and Armin Zoeggeler of Italy in second.

The U.S. and Canadian teams protested Hackl's boots, claiming they weren't made available to all the racers. But the luge federation had approved the boots before the race and rejected the protest.

"They look new and strange, they are within the rules. It's not my problem. They have a very good aerodynamic shape, and that's the advantage," Hackl said.

And it translated into a .213 of a second edge over Zoeggeler, with Prock in third, .401 behind.

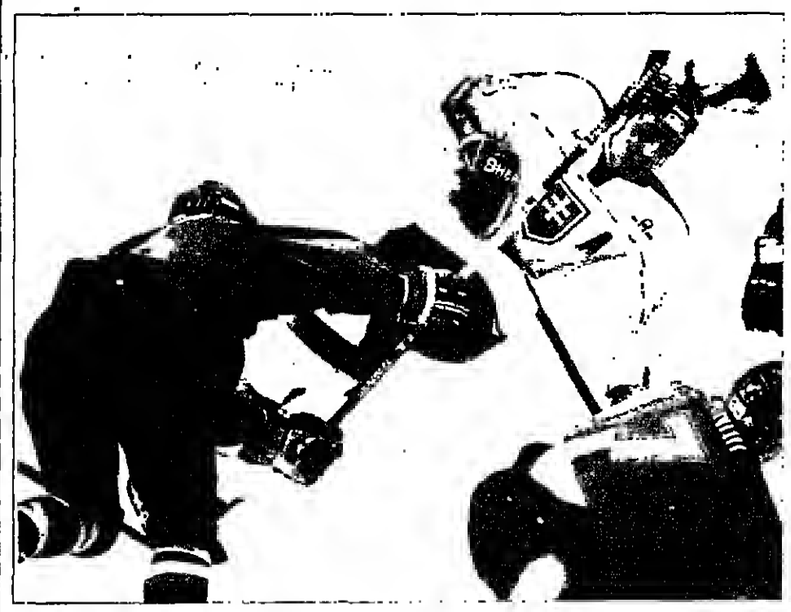
Danilova's gold boosted the Winter Games' total of the former Soviet Union and Russia to 99 — the most victories by any country.

The official computer records of the Nagano Games showed Danilova had clinched the 100th gold for Russia/Soviet Union. But the Russian team book indicated it was only the 99th.

The Russian book lists medals starting from 1956, when the Soviet Union took part for the first time in Winter Olympics.

Left out of the team's count is a gold medal in men's special figure skating won by Nikolai Panin of Russia at the 1908 Summer Olympics in London. This apparently caused the discrepancy.

Russian figure skaters Elena Berezhnaia and Anton Sikharulidze perform in the Pair Short Programme at the White Ring Stadium in Nagano. The pairs are competing in the XVIII Winter Olympics (Reuters photo)



Slovakia's Jozef Dano (C) is flipped by Italy's Bruno Zarrillo (L) and Gaetano Orlando (R) during their men's Olympic ice hockey match at the XVIII Winter Olympics in Nagano February 8. Slovakia defeated Italy by four goals to three (Reuters photo)

Stars old and new cross paths at NBA All-Star Game

NEW YORK (AFP) — Michael Jordan's last All-Star Game will be Kobe Bryant's first — as generations of National Basketball Association greats cross paths at the midseason celebration on Sunday.

The anticipation for Sunday's game was tempered, however, when Jordan, who repeatedly has said that this will be his final season, missed Saturday's Eastern Conference practice due to 'flu.

NBA physician John Hefferon examined Jordan in the morning and reponed that the Chicago Bulls superstar had a 101-degree fever and an upper respiratory ailment. Jordan was treated with antibiotics. His status for the game was uncertain.

Jordan missed media day on Friday to play golf in Las Vegas with Charles Barkley, incurring a $10,000 fine from the league.

The success of All-Star Weekend, which began in 1984, can be attributed directly to Jordan, who played in his first All-Star Game one year later. He is one of just two players in league history to compete in the Slam Dunk Contest, Long Distance Shootout and All-Star Game.

If Jordan is able to play, he likely figures to be matched up against Bryant, the soaring sensation of the Los Angeles Lakers who was just six years old when Jordan first became an All-Star.

If there is one player in the league ready to assume the mantel of excitement from Jordan, it is the 19-year-old Bryant, who leads a pack of seven players making their All-Star Game debuts.

Jordan has had many memorable moments at All-Star Weekend. Just last year, he recorded the first triple-double in All-Star Game history, going for 14 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists as the Eastern Conference raced past the Western Conference 132-120 in Cleveland.

One day earlier, Bryant provided a glimpse of things to come from him. Just eight months removed from high school, he scored a record 31 points in the Rookie Game, then capped a spectacular night by winning the Slam Dunk Contest.

Since the mid-1980s, no player has produced more gasps of wonderment from fans than Jordan. But earlier this season, it was Jordan who was amazed by Bryant's trampoline act, asking Bulls teammate Scottie Pippen, "Did we jump like that when we were 19?"

Jordan did jump like that in 1987 and 1988, when he won the Slam Dunk Contests in daring duels with Dominique Wilkins. In 1990, he entered the Long Distance Shootout and finished last. But that is the only disappointment he has had at an annual weekend gathering that seemingly was made for him.

"It is a lifelong dream to play with him," said New Jersey Nets centre Jayson Williams, who is playing in his first All-Star Game. "I am going to hire a photographer to try and get some pictures of me with him. I told you before — Michael Jordan is the Black Jesus in Nike."

"Anything Michael does overshadows, so if this is his last game, then yes, it will be Jordan's last All-Star game and it will overshadow everything," Phoenix Suns guard Jason Kidd said. "I mean, he is the icon of basketball."

Jordan's showing in last year's game actually lowered his career All-Star scoring average to 21.1, still the best in NBA history. He was named Most Valuable Player in 1988, scoring 40 points before the hometown Chicago crowd, and in 1996, scoring 20 points in 22 minutes.

Many of Jordan's memorable moments have come in Madison Square Garden, the world's most famous arena. He may have one more in store — unless he is upstaged by Bryant, who already has begun carving an All-Star Weekend legacy of his own.

Bryant made his first career point in Madison Square Garden, and it is there this weekend where he could make another point — that he and the rest of the new breed of All-Stars are ready to take the torch of greatness from the veterans.

Voted by fans as a Western Conference starter although he does not start for his own team, Bryant joins six others making their All-Star debuts, most of them youngsters.

Joining Bryant as first-timers on the West squad are Lakers guard Nick Van Exel and San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan, the first rookie to be chosen since Grant Hill in 1995.

The Eastern Conference has four first-timers among its reserves. The youngest is Boston Celtics forward Antoine Walker, who, like Bryant, is in just his second season. Williams and Atlanta Hawks guard Steve Smith have improved their solid games to a new level. And Indiana Pacers center Rik Smits finally has made it in his 10th season.

This year's rosters were wide open due to injuries suffered by perennial selections such as Pippen, Hakeem Olajuwon, John Stockton, Patrick Ewing and Alonzo Mourning. As a result, 14 of the 29 players from last year's game are not back. The absence of Ewing also leaves the host Knicks without a representative.

UPS goes online with Winter Olympics

UPS, the world's largest express package delivery company and a worldwide partner of the Winter Olympic Games 1998, has launched a new web site dedicated to the company's Winter Olympic sponsorship.

Recording two million hits daily, the new Web site (www.ups.com/Olympics/) features news and information about UPS' involvement with the Winter Olympics as well as an exciting interactive Olympic Games quiz.

"Our sponsorship of the Winter Olympic Games gives us the opportunity to demonstrate UPS' speed and reliability around the world," said Damian Bond, Regional Managing Director, UPS Middle East Operations. "The Web site is an ideal medium to communicate the vast resources UPS has put in place to support the Olympic Games, while demonstrating the scope of our capabilities to our customers around the world."

As a winner of the Computerworld Smithsonian Award for innovation and global contributions in its Global Telecommunications Network, UPS has invested more than $1 billion yearly in technology.

UPS' Olympic Web pages provide details on its Olympic legacy programmes, which provides sports equipment to underprivileged children through youth recreation organisations on five continents. The porogramme, one of the most far-reaching philanthropic initiatives in the company's history, was launched in October 1997 in seven countries: The United States, Taiwan, Germany, France, Canada, Australia and Mexico.

UPS, the world's largest express package delivery company, began sponsorship of the Olympic Games in 1994, when the company become a worldwide sponsor of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Today, UPS is one of 11 worldwide partners for the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, and the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, Australia.

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(Extension of Time)
Reference is made to the Announcement in local newspaper on 2nd February, 1998 regarding the Invitation for Pre-Qualification of Contractors for the Construction of Integrated Development Project for the Southern Ghors.
The time for the Purchase of the pre-qualification documents has been extended to February 17th, 1998 instead of February 10th, 1998. Accordingly Item No. 5 of the above referenced Announcement shall read as follows:
"5. The deadline set for the purchase of pre-qualification documents shall be on February, 17th, 1998."
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Dr. Dureid Mahasneh
Address
Special Committee for
The Mujib and Southern Ghors Project Address:
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Yeltsin warns against U.S. 'world hegemony'

ROME (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin warned in an interview published on Sunday against allowing the United States to hold a monopoly on world power.

"History shows that attempts to establish world hegemony are always short-lived," Mr. Yeltsin told Italy's Corriere Della Sera newspaper in reply to a question about the influence of U.S. foreign policy.

He advocated what he called "a multipolar world," free of overbearing superpowers.

"I realise it's not easy to break old habits... but I have to say the attempts of some countries to impose a unipolar model on the world, to assume the role of leader, are unrealistic and even dangerous," he added.

Mr. Yeltsin, who is due to visit Italy and the Vatican this week, was speaking in Moscow as the United States sent more warplanes to the Gulf and Britain prepared to do the same.

Washington and London have warned that a military assault on Iraq is inevitable unless Iraqi President Saddam Hussein backs down in a row over U.N. weapons inspections.

Russia has actively sought a diplomatic solution to the crisis, and Mr. Yeltsin warned last week that heavy-handed U.S. action in Iraq could trigger a third world war.

Mr. Yeltsin is due to arrive on Monday in Italy, where the actions of the U.S. military are very much under the spotlight.

An American warplane sent 20 people plunging to their deaths when it severed a cable-car wire in the Dolomite mountains on Tuesday. The incident has prompted widespread anger and renewed calls for the closure of U.S. bases in Italy or, at the very least, a review of their status.

The Russian president is due to meet his Italian counterpart Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi in a three-day visit, during which he will also meet Pope John Paul at the Vatican.

YEAR OF THE TIGER: Visitors admire a gigantic metallic lantern in the shape of a tiger set up in the square of Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek memorial hall as part of annual celebrations for the Lantern Festival on Sunday. The lantern is shaped like a tiger because 1998 is the Chinese year of the tiger (AP photo)

PNA asks U.S. for protective gear against Iraqi weapons

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinians asked the United States Sunday for urgent shipments of gas masks and antibiotics to protect residents of the occupied territories from a possible Iraqi attack on Israel with chemical or biological weapons, officials said.

Riad Zanun, the health minister in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), said he made the request during a meeting with U.S. Consul General John Herbst.

"We have asked the United States to provide equipment and medicine to the Palestinian Authority to protect against a possible attack as it has done with Israel," Mr. Zanun said in a written statement.

He said that the PNA lacked protective equipment in the event that Iraq attacks Israel and that its missiles fall short and land in the West Bank.

"We have heard there is U.S. airlift of large quantities of gas masks and antibiotics to Israel and I don't think that the American people will accept any discrimination or neglect of the Palestinians," he said.

Mr. Zanun did not say how the U.S. consul responded to his request.

The PNA had also written letters to the World Heath Organisation and the U.S. Agency for International Development asking for technical help in preparing civil defence measures against possible chemical or biological weapons attack, he said.

Euro-MPs arrive for Algeria mission

ALGIERS (AFP) — A delegation of nine members of the European Parliament arrived Sunday on a fact-finding mission prompted by a recent wave of massacres that left several hundred dead.

Delegation members were scheduled to meet Algerian MPs as well as representatives of human rights and women's groups, lawyers and journalists and relatives of some of the victims.

Led by French MEP Andre Soulier, the delegation was to return to Brussels on Thursday, although some of its members hinted they would leave earlier if their activities were unduly restricted.

Prior to their departure, the MEPs were anxious to play down any suggestion that they would be seeking to probe the circumstances surrounding the recent killings in the light of growing demands for an international inquiry into who is responsible for them.

Israeli government endorses bill to regulate operation of Shin Bet

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli government on Sunday endorsed a bill to regulate the operation of the internal security service, the Shin Beth, an official said.

The bill, drafted by the ministry of justice, still must be presented for parliamentary endorsement.

The draft for the first time in Israel's history stipulates rules for the supervision of the Shin Bet by the government and the Knesset (parliament) as well as how the heads of the security agency are named.

In a first version, the text had explicitly authorised Shin Bet interrogators to use physical pressure on detainees in line with current practice in Israel.

But the clause, which critics said could be seen as a carte-blanche for torture, was withdrawn under pressure from human rights organisations in Israel and abroad.

At the request of Palestinian prisoners, the Israeli supreme court is due to decide if the interrogation methods of the Shin Bet can be deemed torture.

The court until now has authorised interrogators to exercise "moderate physical pressure" on detainees, most often meaning sleep deprivation for days at a time and binding suspects in painful positions, the head covered with a sack.

The Shin Bet, which is responsible to the prime minister, is authorised to use stronger methods when it believes a suspect has information about preparations for an attack against Israeli targets.

Amnesty International called on Israel Wednesday to forbid the use of torture as the supreme court was examining the legality of "physical pressure" exercised on a Palestinian detainee.

"Israel is the only country in the world known to have de facto legalised torture by authorising certain interrogation methods," the human rights organisation said in a statement.

Iran's top court ratifies editor's death sentence

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's supreme court has ratified the death sentence for Morteza Firoozi, a prominent newspaper editor convicted of spying, a newspaper reported on Sunday.

Mr. Firoozi, a former editor-in-chief of the daily Iran News, has been in custody on spying charges since May.

Iran has not named any country for which Mr. Firoozi was alleged to have spied, but Iranian newspapers which last year carried brief reports of his then-rumoured arrest had said he was accused of spying for the United States.

Jumhouri Islami newspaper said the supreme court had ratified the death sentence and handed it down to relevant authorities.

"Firoozi used to spy for three foreign countries," it said without naming them.

It was not clear when the death sentence was passed. Death sentences have to be ratified by the supreme court before they can be carried out.

There had been widespread rumours about what had happened to Mr. Firoozi after his disappearance last year. But Iranian newspapers quoted his colleagues at the English-language daily as saying he had gone to Britain for studies.

Iran News, which Mr. Firoozi helped set up in 1994, dropped his name from its list of executives in October. The daily has been attacked by hardline newspapers for being too soft on the United States, even though it was believed to often reflect the views of Iran's Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Firoozi, a frequent commentator on Iranian politics, had earlier served as editor-in-chief of Tehran Times, a major English-language newspaper set up after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

After counting quarter of votes

Clerides, challenger equal in Cyprus presidential elections

NICOSIA (AFP) — Incumbent President Glafcos Clerides and main challenger George Iacovou were neck and neck with more than one quarter of the votes counted in Cyprus' presidential election on Sunday.

Two hours into counting, Mr. Clerides was a whisker ahead with 39.8 per cent of the vote to former Foreign Minister Iacovou's 39.7 per cent with almost 27 per cent of the ballots counted, according to election officials.

"From the first results it is clear George Iacovou is getting much lower percentages than expected and is in essence beaten," said Nicos Anastassiades, leader of the right-wing Disy Party which is backing Mr. Clerides.

A second round will be held next Sunday if no candidate secures 51 per cent of the vote.

Outsider Vassos Lyssarides, the 77-year-old leader of the Socialist Party Edek, was shaping up to be the kingmaker for a possible second round, having secured 11.3 per cent of the vote.

Alexis Galanos, a rebel candidate angling for the vote of centre-right Diko Party members unhappy with the official party decison to join Communist Akel in backing Mr. Iacovou, had secured 4.2 per cent of the votes counted.

Former President George Vassiliou, who is not backed by a major party, had secured a disappointing 3.2 per cent.

The remaining votes were shared by the other two of the record seven candidates.

Counting in what is turning out to be a close contest between Mr. Clerides, at 78 the oldest of the candidates, and Mr. Iacovou, nearly 20 years younger, is being done at five regional centres, Nicosia, Larnaca, Paphos, Limassol and Paralimni.

Opinion polls suggested Mr. Clerides and Mr. Iacovou will each secure a third of the vote in the first round, forcing a second round on Feb. 15.

More than 90 per cent of the nearly 447,000 Greek Cypriots eligible to vote cast their ballots.

Democrats rally behind Clinton in new battle with investigator

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton continued to hask in sunny job approval ratings Sunday following heated attacks on the White House sex scandal prosecutor by those he is investigating.

Most Americans approve of the way the president is doing his job more than two weeks after charges first surfaced that Mr. Clinton had an affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, 24, then urged her to lie about it under oath.

Separate polls in the latest issues of Newsweek and U.S. News and World Report that were released late Saturday gave Mr. Clinton a 66-per cent job approval rating. That figure, however, dropped to 42 per cent when people were asked for their opinion of him as an individual.

The poll results came as Lewinsky lawyer William Ginsburg joined top Democrats and a Clinton attorney in blasting independent counsel, Kenneth Starr. In a statement issued in Los Angeles and cited in U.S. media, Mr. Ginsburg

(Continued on page 7)

New witness says Lewinsky told her of alleged affair — report

NEW YORK (AFP) — A new witness in the scandal told investigators she heard tapes of presidential phone calls to the former intern who claims she had an affair with President Bill Clinton, Newsweek reported Sunday. Ashley Raines, a White House aide and friend of Monica Lewinsky gave investigators detailed accounts of what Ms. Lewinsky told her about the alleged affair, the magazine reported. Newsweek, citing lawyers close to Mr. Clinton's defence, said the White House was "worried about Ashley Raines," whose father is an Arkansas architect and mother manages the Excelsior Hotel, site of the 1991 alleged encounter between Mr. Clinton and Paula Jones. Ms. Raines also said she listened to telephone messages from President Clinton left on Ms. Lewinsky's answering machine, lawyers close to the president's defence told Newsweek.

Dodi had secret love child — press

LONDON (AFP) — Dodi Fayed had a secret love child as he romanced Diana, Princess of Wales, a British newspaper claimed Sunday, quoting the child's mother.

Diane Holliday, a 36-year-old British travel consultant, was said by The Observer to have initially handed her baby Marni over for adoption in the United States.

But the paper said Ms. Holliday had now hired a London lawyer to win the baby's return.

The paper added that Marni, who was nine months old when Fayed died in a Paris car crash with Diana and their driver on Aug. 30, was born in an American hospital in November 1996, around the time some reports have said Diana started dating Fayed.

Ms. Holliday's lawyer Douglas Alexiou was quoted in The Observer as saying: "I am instructed by my client to confirm that she is the mother of the child.

"I have the birth certificate in front of me and the father is the late deceased Dodi Fayed. I am satisfied that the instructions are correct." In The Observer, Ms. Holliday, from Bury Saint Edmunds in eastern England, claimed she met Dodi Fayed in Paris in 1995. When she later told him she was pregnant, she alleged he told her to have an abortion.

Dodi Fayed, 42, was the eldest son of Mohammad Fayed, the owner of London's Harrods department store and the Paris Ritz, where Diana and Dodi dined on the night they died.

If Dodi's paternity is proved, Marni could become heir to her grandfather's fortune.

Early Sunday, Harrods officials called Ms. Holliday's claims "cruel and wicked."

Harrods spokesman Michael Cole said he was confident the allegations were untrue, having carried out a "thorough investigation."

In fact, he said Mr. Fayed would have been "delighted and overjoyed" to have a granddaughter and would have adopted the child, but was now confident she was not Dodi's.

Mr. Fayed's lawyers in the U.S. and Britain have thoroughly investigated the matter and have concluded the allegation is entirely false.

Results of the Jordan Times Car Competition for 1997

Jordan Press Foundation Chairman Mahmoud al Kayed draws the wining eovelop Saturday. Watching from left to right are George Hawatmeh the chief editor of the Jordan Times, Nader Hourani, deputy director general of the Jordan Press Foundation and Abdullah Hasanat, Jordan Times deputy editor. *Photo by Nasser Ayyoub*

Winner of the Grand Prize: Suzuki Baleno Car:

Evelyn Maddock .... From Ain Al Basha

Other Winners

1. Cindy Mansur ... From Amman (Free ticket Amman-Athens-Amman provided by Royal Jordanian).
2. Seumi Nomura Arafat ... From Amman (20" Television set).
3. Awad S.H. Hussein ... From Irbid (Video set)
4. Tawfiq Ahmad Al Shwabkeh ... From Madaba (Stereo set).
5. Nazrul-Mozibur Rahman ... From Amman (Vacuum cleaner).
6. Yazid Qusous ... From Amman (One year subscription to the Jordan Times).
7. Laith E. Haddad ... From Amman (Seven-month subscription to the Jordan Times).
8. Mahmoud Ziad Mahmoud ... From Madaba, Al Arish (Three-month subscription to the Jordan Times).

Winners are kindly requested to call at the Public Relations Office at the Jordan Press Foundation on Saturday, Feb. 14, during office hours to receive their prizes.

De Niro caged in former Bond house

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Frightened of possible repercussions about the project he's spearheading, Robert De Niro is living in the most seclusion he has ever experienced while filming in LA. The project he is co-producing, "Affirmative Action," is a fictional story about a scandal involving the LA Police and some inner city killings that are being done by conservative right-wing organisations. No one's quite sure if the actor is more afraid of the local police or the conservatives. So, he's living caged in a $30,000-a-month mansion that's already a tried-and-tested safe house because it used to be owned by Roger Moore, a former James Bond.

Twins celebrate 100th birthday in upstate New York

BRIGHTON (R) — Twins Rhea Spohner and Ruth Emblow celebrated their 100th birthday Friday, a feat experts said happens in just one set of twins out of 100,000. The sisters live separately in apartments in the same senior citizens' complex, while their little sister, who is 94, lives nearby. Statistically, only one pair of twins out of 100,000 survives so long, James Vaupel, a demographer at Duke University told the newspaper. Longevity runs in the family. The twins' mother died at age 101, their father lived to be 87 and all six of his sisters lived to be more than 90 years old, the twins said.

Nagano barman goes on bender for the games

NAGANO (R) — If bending spoons were an Olympic sport, a Japanese barman in a pork-pie hat would be hometown favourite for the gold medal. What he would do with the medal afterwards is anyone's guess. Metal does strange things in the hands of Yoshio Matsuzaki, Nagano's very own Uri Geller. A stocky 46-year-old with gangster good looks, Matsuzaki is cutlery's worst nightmare: spoons droop in his hands, forks fast become a tangled mess of metal. As his customers peer through their beer-glasses, the 46-year-old casually ties a knot in a disposable plastic cigarette lighter.

Chinese doctor finds swallowed chopsticks

BEIJING (R) — A Chinese doctor has claimed a world record for examining the insides of 42,195 stomachs and removing all manner of objects, from rings to watches and chopsticks. The official Xinhua news agency said a local committee awarded Zhang Shanshen a record certificate for use of the gastroscope, an optical instrument inserted through the mouth and oesophagus to allow inspection of the intestine. Zhang, achieved his total in less than 18 years. Of the objects he has plucked from inside patients, the longest was 20.5 cm and the widest 2.5 cm, Xinhua said.

Spaniard may have taken prize lotto ticket to grave

MADRID (R) — A Spanish man may have taken his winning lottery ticket with him to the grave. Relatives of Juan Villasante Paz said in an interview that they believed he had the ticket on him when he died of a heart attack two hours before the draw on Jan. 26. Villasante's niece Maria Antonia Alonsa told the daily El Pais the family had been unable to find the winning ticket worth $32,500. Villasante, 76, was a street sweeper in the northern Spanish region of Galicia until he retired.